Decision-Making Process of Educational Organizations in Nepal

Dilip Humagain, Niranjan Katel, Navin Timalsena, Amber Gurung

M.Phil Scholar, Kathmandu University

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Dilip Humagain   ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8145-6023

Niranjan Katel   ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-2220-5393

                      (Lecturer, Solukhumbu Multiple Campus)

Navin Timalsena   ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7636-5729

Ambar Gurung   Email: amberpec123@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines head teachers' experience regarding decisions at the institutional level. Particularly, it aims to explore the decision-making processes of head teachers in Nepal's community secondary schools, highlighting the lived experiences and ethical dilemmas that influence institutional decisions. We employed narrative inquiry to generate information from the participants. Altogether, four participants were selected from different parts of Nepal. Using a narrative inquiry approach, we talked directly to head teachers whose stories show that making decisions is much more than a technical or policy-driven act; it is a deeply human process shaped by personal values, the culture of the organization, and the weight of community expectations. Even though policy changes call for participatory governance, our research shows that decision-making power is still often centralized and that stakeholder involvement is often limited or just for show. Head teachers had ongoing problems like political interference, lack of resources, and bureaucratic inertia, but they showed resilience and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of their students. Their stories show how policy ideals don't always match up with real life. By focusing on decision-making that fits the local context and is guided by ethical and inclusive values, this study adds to our understanding of educational leadership in challenging settings. For the future, both research and policy should aim to close the gap between what is written in policies and what happens in practice. This can be achieved by encouraging teamwork, building

leadership skills, and making everyone more accountable. These efforts will help Nepal's schools move closer to offering fair, high-quality education for all students. Policymakers must make the rules clearer so that head teachers know what they can decide in the right way, and protect head teachers from unfair political interference. They should be given useful training for professional growth that will help conflict resolution, using the latest technology, and be capable of making the right decision to solve the problem. Head teachers must influence others by making the right decision. The parents, SMC members, students, and community also support the fair and transparent decisions of the head teacher.

Keywords: Decision making, Educational organization, community Secondary School, Narrative Inquiry

Raising the Curtain of the Study

Our research began with a casual discussion within our group about what it entails to be the head of a school in Nepal. One of us had a cousin who was a head teacher and would constantly narrate tricky choices, sleepless nights, and the pressure of pleasing everyone in the school community. Another was working closely with schools on a visit and saw firsthand head teachers' immense responsibility, which sometimes translates into minimal support. These direct observations interested us. We asked ourselves, how do head teachers actually decide, and what impacts those decisions?

The longer we talked, the more we realized that school decisions aren't just policy or rules. They're about people. We thought about the students, teachers, parents, and communities affected each time a head teacher makes a choice. That was when we realized this conversation was not just interesting but important. We wanted to go beyond policy and statistics, and hear instead from individual accounts of school leaders. We wanted their witness to tell us what decision-making in real Nepali schools is like. In the majority of developing countries, school leadership is still inextricably linked with community expectations, local values, and material realities, which cannot always be found through quantitative study alone (Bush, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to determine head teachers' perceptions of the decision making process. We would like to know how they make important decisions, how they encounter challenges, and how the values, experiences, and environments they live in influence their choices. It is proven that school heads make their decisions based on a mix of individual values, organizational culture, and environmental policy pressure (Leithwood et al., 2020). Through the

narrative interviews, we expect to obtain qualitative and rich information that portrays the struggle as well as the lessons of educational leadership.

Nepal's education system is also diversified, and so are the schools. But one thing is common: leadership matters. The head teacher's choices have an impact on the learning culture, teacher morale, student outcomes, and the connection with communities. In fact, leadership is the second most important school-based influence on student learning, second only to classroom teaching (Robinson et al., 2008). By conducting this research, we hope to bring the lived experiences of head teachers into prominence and show how the decision-making journey of head teachers can guide future leaders, scholars, and policymakers towards more effective practice.

Background of the Study

Decision making is generally known to be a thinking process where one has to choose between various alternatives. In educational organizations, the decision-making process can be considered an organizational change guide (Borko, 2019). Good decision-making in schools involves a collaborative undertaking by stakeholders to present input, analyze alternatives, and arrive at a rational conclusion of what will be the most suitable course of action.

The headteacher, in this respect, is a focal leader who plays an influential role in the school's operations. The head teacher is able to not only support the initiation and reinforcement of institutional values but also significantly contributes to the creation of an ethical climate in the school (Northouse, 2019).

As an educational leader, the head teacher is expected to make many decisions to ensure quality education for all irrespective of caste, creed, and ethnicity. In the context of politically influenced community schools (Shrestha, 2014). Head teachers are always responsible for quality decision-making. In other words, the head teacher's difficulties in making decisions may be hindering children from having meaningful access, participation, and getting a significant outcome of education.

Bhattarai and Maharjan (2016) argue that decisions become ethical when head teachers consult with their stakeholders (Subordinates, school management committee). The essence of their argument is that when head teachers don't consult with their stakeholders, their decision is likely to be unethical. When the head teacher does not consult with stakeholders about their decision-making dilemmas, making quality education accessible to all irrespective of their caste, creed, gender, and ethnicity could be deemed challenging (Bhattarai, 2013).

School should be a place where every child gets an opportunity to grow into their full potential. It is essential that all stakeholders, such as the School Management Committee (SMC), parents, teachers, ward chairperson, and head teacher, be like-minded to build an ethical school (Starratt, 2005) where the voice of every child is heard, decisions are made within the framework of the best interest of students (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016), children get to see a role-model head teacher. So, they are taught moral virtues (courage, temperance, generosity, self-control, honesty, sociability, modesty, fairness, and justice) (Northouse, 2019). With its rich cultural heritage and diverse educational landscape, Nepal faces challenges other developing countries share, including limited resources, natural disasters, and lack of leadership development opportunities amidst global demands, political interference, and high stakeholder expectations.

Global education quality depends on school leadership (Berkovich & Bogler, 2020). The multidimensional nature of head teachers' work affects student outcomes; thus, the contextual nuances and school environment must be well understood to set a socially just climate (Bogotch, 2002; Brown, 2004). School practices are based on awareness of their roles, realities of contexts, and dimensions of leadership (González-Falcón et al., 2020).

In addition, the education system in Nepal has shifted towards decentralized governance as opposed to a centralized system, which has given the country a vibrant atmosphere in the leadership of schools, with both prospects and challenges to enhance outcomes. Nevertheless, there are no detailed research studies examining head teachers' in their roles, opportunities, and challenges in particular scenarios. This research paper fills this gap by considering the contextual meanings and experiences of four secondary schools' head teachers, and shedding light on the role of their understanding of context in their perceptions. This study enlightens the decision-making process of educational organization in Nepal by addressing decision-making dimensions in educational organizations in Nepal that reflect the socio-political, economic, and educational environment in Nepal.

Statement of the Problem

The decision-making process is at the heart of how schools are managed, and it really shapes not only a school's success but also how well students learn and how much trust people put in these institutions. In Nepal, big reforms have been aiming to give more power to local actors instead of central authorities. A key part of this reform is the School Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2022–2032, which was published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in 2022. The SESP talks about making education fairer, inclusive, and high-quality by

using decentralized decision-making, encouraging local ownership, and relying on evidence to guide management (MoEST, 2022). Although such policies may appear ideal on paper, in reality, the situation in schools may be quite different and complex. Evidence indicates that teachers, parents, students, and community members usually play a token role in decision-making, which is not so influential but a show (Shiwakoti, 2021). The process of making decisions is not very transparent in most situations; thus, there is a disconnect between what the SESP wants and what happens in reality. As an example, even though the plan has focused on participatory type of governance, in most cases, a significant number of schools continue to make the majority of decisions at the top, either by the head teacher or by the SMC members who were elected to the positions due to political reasons (Puri & Chhetri, 2024; Regmi, 2023).

This concentration of power can leave teachers and parents feeling disconnected and less responsible for outcomes, which can harm school performance and community backing. The same concerns the studies of global management; e.g., McKinsey & Company (2023) notes that effective decision-making in most cases implies the introduction of the directly affected people and providing them with a real voice. It is likely that when stakeholders engage in schools, when stakeholders genuinely engage, this increases morale, allocates resources more effectively, and results in school governance that is more responsive (UNICEF Nepal, 2024).

To top all that, external funding and a sluggish bureaucracy may further cloud the waters. The priorities of the donors do not always correspond to the type of needs that are in local schools, and such policies are adopted that are difficult to implement (Regmi, 2023). Delays and rigid administrative steps can also block quick, context-sensitive decisions. These factors create a mismatch between actual educational needs and the policies designed to meet them.

Despite the fact that a good decision-making process is crucial in the good running of the school, little is known about how the decision-making process occurs in Nepalese schools. Further evidence is required on, who makes decisions, what decision making strategies are widely applied, how the schools overcome challenges, and how they impact education and learning practices. Such gaps need to be addressed to transfer the objectives of the School Education Sector Plan (SESP) inclusiveness, equity and quality into the real practice at the school level.

Good decision-making is one of the key elements of good school leadership, but head teachers in Nepal usually encounter a lot of difficulties in making decisions that pertain to an institution. Although there are policy frameworks, including the School Education Sector Plan

(SESP 2022-2032), there is a very apparent disconnect between intentions made by policies and their actual application in practice. Head teachers are in social environments that are complex in nature with limited resources, bureaucracies, political interests, and contradictory expectations by different stakeholders. The conditions usually pose some ethical and practical challenges that define decision-making activities and influence the performance of schools. Consequently, the methods by which school administrators decide in such situations need to be studied to enhance the quality of school leadership in Nepal, its efficacy, and its inclusivity and ethical nature.

Purpose Statement

This study is meant to dig into how decisions really get made in Nepal's schools, trying to get a clearer picture of the whole process. I want to look at which decision-making models and techniques school leaders actually use in their day-to-day work, and also see how much, if at all, teachers, parents, students, and community members are involved. This big policy called the School Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2022–2032 stresses using evidence to guide decisions, planning at the local level, and making governance more inclusive to boost equity and quality (MoEST, 2022). But you often wonder: does that really happen in practice?

By pointing out both the roadblocks and the things that help good decision-making, the research should show where policy and reality don't quite match up. I hope to develop some practical suggestions for head teachers, policy folks, and anyone else who cares about school leadership. In the end, the idea is to feed into better school governance—and with luck that should translate into stronger educational outcomes all over Nepal (Puri & Chhetri, 2024; Acharya & Sigdel, 2024).

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the decision making processes of head teachers in community secondary schools in Nepal using their personal experiences. The study will employ a narrative inquiry approach, in order to gain a deeper insight on institutional decision making, problem negotiation, and stakeholder engagement by head teachers in their respective local communities. The research will attempt to show how personal beliefs, company culture, and policy realities affect practical decision-making by documenting their own stories. The findings are meant to guide the policymakers, school leaders, and researchers with the practical suggestions to come up with effective, ethical, and inclusive school leadership in Nepal.

Research Questions

1. How do Nepalese leaders make institutional choices while considering stakeholder input and local context?

2. What hurdles and techniques do leaders face and employ in their decision-making processes to guarantee successful and ethical school leadership?

Delimitations

This study zeroes in on how head teachers make decisions, using narrative inquiry in four purposively chosen schools across Nepal. In order to keep the scope tight and meaningful, the following delimitations apply:

- Only head teachers' perspectives are examined; views from SMC members, teachers, or parents are not included.
- Four districts (Solukhumbu, Surkhet, Nawalparasi and Syangja) are chosen to cover a variety of contexts, yet the sample is not supposed to be representative of all schools in Nepal.
- It concentrates on the macro-level decisions (resource allocation, involvement of stakeholders, plan of the school) instead of classroom choices.
- Instead of measuring whether policies "work," the study explores how head teachers interpret and apply policy provisions at the school level.
- Findings are grounded in narrative accounts from these four head teachers, so broader generalization to all Nepalese schools is beyond this study's intent.

Unfolding the Pack

The main purpose of this section is to analyze the collected facts and opinions about the decision making process. This section represents the participants' reflection regarding the decision making process of Educational Organizations, especially in Nepal.

Decision-Making Process of Educational Organizations in Nepal

Head Teacher 1

Head teacher 1 leads a community high school in an urban area of Solukhumbu district. He has held the school's leadership position for the past twenty years. He is an experienced teacher with two and a half decades of teaching experience. He has an effective internal support that started with his leadership journey because he was already a senior teacher who was trusted by the school and the community.

Head teacher 1 narrates how the process was followed to make the decisions in his educational organization. He is the head teacher of a community school. He narrates that,

"I view decision-making as a balanced and sensitive process that adapts to the situation at hand. In certain matters—especially those involving administrative responsibilities in educational organization, rules enforcement, and urgent issues—I adopt a centralized approach, making key decisions independently for the sake of efficiency and discipline."

As a head teacher, he usually begins the decision-making process by preparing a formal agenda based on the school's needs. Sometimes, the agenda emerges from the pressure groups, often by stakeholders, as well as the head teacher himself. Once the agenda is ready, he shares it with all the concerned authorities through official notices to ensure they are well informed before the meeting.

Every successful organization must have the ability to make decisions that enable it to achieve its goals and meet its basic needs. All management activities and functions essentially involve the decision-making process. This is because planning, organizing, mobilizing, and supervising are all related to the concept and behavior of decision-making (Yunita et al., 2023).

The head teacher further narrates that, *"I always try to practice participatory decision-making. In scheduled meetings, I bring together the School Management Committee (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), teachers, and sometimes even student representatives. We have open discussions, where all can express their opinion. In discussion, we arrive at a consensus. Once a decision is finalized, I sign the meeting minutes as a form of official verification, and the decision is formally documented."*

However, there are times when urgent decisions must be made. In such emergency situations, he takes the initiative to act independently for the welfare of the school, though he makes sure to report and justify his actions in the following meeting. Despite the authority he holds, he values transparency and inclusive practice.

He takes on leadership role, when making some key decisions, especially on academic planning and day-to-day running of the school. He also makes sure that all the concerned parties are perfectly set and well informed in the process. School Management Committee (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), teachers, parents and students are updated and included as much as possible.

He involves the chairperson and important members of the SMC in making decisions that are either complicated or may be sensitive because he acknowledges the importance of collective

decision-making and shared responsibility. In the decision-making process, he ensures that the decisions taken therein must be in compliance with the Education Act and the existing rules and regulations in education. As much as he tends to be more directive in terms of discipline and order, this is targeted at balancing with participatory and collaborative practices that take cognizance of the needs and voices of the school community.

Being the head teacher, he has experienced numerous challenges in steering the decision-making process within his school. One of the most widespread challenges is that SMC members, PTA members, and parents are unaware of the Education Act and existing education rules and regulations. Many of them are not properly informed or educated about these issues, resulting in misunderstandings or unrealistic expectations during meetings.

Another major challenge is resistance to change on the part of some stakeholders. Even if measures are being taken for the betterment of the school, introducing new policies or practices is met with hesitation and outright opposition. Such resistance is likely to discourage necessary reforms.

Political intervention is the main block to be free in decision making. Some non-qualified persons are also selected in the committee by political interference and are guided by the same political parties and ideology. This undermines power and blocks the right decision in making the school plans and policies for academic improvement (Upadhyay, 2020).

Political biases are another issue of concern. Some stakeholders approach school decisions based on politics rather than what is best for the students and the school. Especially in crucial decisions like appointing staff, resource distribution or introducing new programs political influence disturbs the situation which undermines the process's core values.

The majority of stakeholders, such as SMC and PTA members, have other work or activities to attend to outside of school. They tend to allocate little time to school affairs, attending the meetings in a rush or walking away before matters are resolved. This hurried involvement affects the quality of the discussion and makes it difficult to make extensive decisions.

The head teacher is seen struggling with the school's very small budget. Even when he comes to an agreement on what needs to be done, he largely faces difficulties in implementing

decisions in reality since he often faces limitations in implementing decisions effectively due to lack of funding or necessary materials.

There are also communication gaps between the stakeholders themselves. Misinformation and lack of proper follow-up create misunderstandings that delay execution all the more. This situation is further aggravated by the ambiguity of defined roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders. Most members end up overstepping or withdrawing without clear comprehension of their roles, thereby creating an imbalance in participation and accountability. Such is the nature of these challenges that they make decision-making very frustrating. In spite of that, he keeps his decision-making open, inclusive, and participatory to ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of the school community.

The head teacher further narrates that, "In my experience as a head teacher, stakeholder participation in school decision-making has been inconsistent. Some stakeholders are highly active, sharing their input and doing their share in balanced discussions, while others are passive observers, rarely contributing or participating in the process. This uneven participation tends to affect the quality of the decisions we arrive at".

To enhance transparency, he makes sure that all meetings are well recorded; all decisions are made in a written form meeting minutes. This practice offers a transparent account to future reference and enhances trust in the stakeholders since the players can observe that their opinions have been taken into a formal consideration even in cases where they are not directly involved in influencing the final decision.

But at the same time he mentions that participation is not always equal. More educated or confident people usually like to take control of the discussion matters hence, decisions may be made based on the opinions of several people as opposed to representing the whole group. However, parents and students, in particular, are often passive because of a lack of confidence, insufficient knowledge of the problem, or because of cultural norms that do not encourage open speaking in official decision-making contexts.

In some communities, for example, the least educated have substantial amounts of influence, which sometimes can be beneficial and at times challenging. While their input can lead to an informed choice, those voices often overpower others to the point of dismissal.

While the involvement of stakeholders does exist in theory, their quality and balance significantly differ. One of his long-term objectives has been to nurture more open and fair involvement where every member irrespective of his background can derive a sense of ownership for the growth of the school and its improvement.

Clear policies and guidelines make the decision-making process easier and effective in schools. Decision-making would be easier in instances when there exist well-defined rules and procedures supporting such decisions. Confusion is thus avoided, with everyone working within the same structure. Such frameworks often cause delay and inconsistency due to either unavailability or lack of awareness.

The head teacher narrates, *"Another important requirement is regular training and capacity building for stakeholders. Most of the members of the School Management Committee (SMC, PTA, and even teachers themselves do not know the exact roles they should play and the legal provisions they ought to observe. Providing them with the continuous orientation and training would enable them to play a bigger and more meaningful part in the process, as confidently as possible".*

A strong and effective communication system is also vital in the school. The head teacher further states that misunderstandings or a lack of timely information often lead to poor decision-making or missed opportunities. We should implement effective communication processes within the school, either formally or informally, such that everyone speaks, everyone is listened to, and informed decisions are made.

Furthermore, clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder are necessary. The process will be easier and more participative as everybody will be aware of what is required of them. Ambiguity in roles often leads to overlapping responsibilities or, worse, complete withdrawal from the process.

Lastly, promoting an inclusive and participatory culture is key. A few individuals should not dominate decision-making. Each of the stakeholders, be it a parent, teacher, student, or member of the community, must feel that his or her contribution is appreciated and that it can make a difference. Creating a culture where all voices matter will make the process easier and more democratic and sustainable."

The head teacher mentioned that overcoming challenges in the school decision-making process has never been easy, but through experience, it is a combination of collaboration, strategic communication, and leadership effort. Collaborative problem-solving practice has been among his major strategies. He engaged all members of the School Management Committee (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), and teachers in discussing problems and finding solutions. This was a strategy that ensured all decisions were participatory in nature and contributed to the development of a sense of group ownership.

Of course, there were also instances when it was not easy to build consensus— particularly when there were differing opinions. Thus, he made it a point to convince everyone on the need to build consensus. In fact, he tries to explain the strength brought by a collective decision.

According to the head teacher, he was able to derive beneficial support and direction from the SMC, PTA, and other key stakeholders of the school. It was with the support of such key stakeholders that the decisions taken gained strength and were easier to implement at grassroots levels. The head teacher relied on the intervention of the authorities for matters that were beyond his control, such as those that needed administrative and legal attention.

An important area is to follow governmental rules and regulations. By incorporating his decisions with existing policies and education legislations in place, he has managed to maintain accountability and transparency. When some were hesitant over his decisions, he took the time to educate them on why his choices were beneficial to students and the learning ambience.

However, at the same time, there were situations where coming up with a consensus could prove to be a challenge, and it could even come to a standstill. In such a case, it was important for him to play the part of a strong leader. At times, in order to fast track the process and ensure all the pressing activities were completed, he even relied on his own authority for everything to work well in the school.

With the combination of both collaboration, persuasion, compliance, and forceful leading when needed, the individual was able to move past the hurdles that were there while ensuring the decision-making process remained functional, with the goal at heart."

The Patterns of Decision Making Practiced in Most of Those Institutions of Learning, Especially within the Developing World of Nepal, are Faced with Challenges that are Preventing

Efficiency and Inclusivity in the Processes of Decision Making. Challenges faced in contemporary decision-making practices include the hierarchical manner that the administration adopts. In this, it can be reasoned that the administration adopts a top-down approach towards decision making, whereby the power lies in the hands of a few individuals in the organization.

The other pressing matter is the absence of stakeholder engagement. The communication that exists between management and other key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and students tends to be inadequate as well as poorly designed. The consequence of this is the absence of active participation and consultation. The voices of the grassroots are not normally heard, and transparency is nonexistent.

Moreover, data and ICT are not sufficient in decision-making. Headteachers use manual systems and old-fashioned ways because they cannot access ICT easily, nor are they conversant with it. Furthermore, poor use of ICT and a lack of training obstruct effective data-driven decision-making. As a result, a system whereby decisions are sluggish, unresponsive, and incongruous with the needs of the whole school community is established.

Head Teacher 2

Head teacher 2 is the head of a community secondary school in urban Surkhet, Karnali Province, Nepal. He has been head teacher for the past eight years. He had 18 years of teaching experience. When he was appointed to head, the school had a population of about 350 students. In the long run, the school has more than 1,000 students through strategic planning and involvement of the head teacher. His leadership career began well on the inside with support because he was already a senior teacher, who was equally respected by the school and the community.

At the time of his appointment, there were approximately 350 students in the school. Over time, through targeted planning and stakeholder engagement, he was able to increase enrollment to over 1,000 students. His leadership journey started with strong internal support, as he was already a senior teacher trusted by the school and the community.

He said that the early years for school improvement were marked by a clear vision on infrastructure development, integration of ICT, and the introduction of bilingual instruction along with a technical stream after SEE. He mentioned that the aforementioned reforms were aimed at modernizing the school and making the institution more responsive to the needs of the students and the community.

"I had a dream to bring visible change within five years. So, we introduced a technical stream and dual mediums of instruction to give students more opportunities. ICT labs and building upgrades were also part of that plan."

In his school, the structure of decision-making seems to be formal and participatory. For instance, the SMC is a key organ at the level of overall decision-making, including on infrastructure and human resource issues. On the other hand, everyday or classroom-level decisions are made by shared leadership with teachers and departmental heads. Annual plans and achievements are published in booklet form and publicly shared for transparency. As noted by the head teacher, while there are specific directives from the local government, school-level decisions are usually discussed internally.

He explained that, while planning is often inclusive, implementation is frequently more difficult because of limited resources, inconsistent commitment, and structural constraints.

"Everyone agrees during the planning phase. Thay all say 'Yes, this should be done.' But when the time for implementation comes, then it gets complicated. There are delays, resistance, or lack of support."

One of the most significant experiences that he communicated was that he has been able to bring students of the Badi tribe that was located 14 kilometers remote from his institution. The dropout rates among these children, especially the girls, used to be very high after grade five since the children had to walk to and from the institution, and many got married at a tender age due to lack of resources."

"We observed that Badi children stopped studying because of distance issues and social problems. So we merged their school with ours. We also provided free transportation. The children are performing very well in Japan and other countries too. However, we still suffer difficulties in managing the transportation fund."

According to his opinion, the involvement of the stakeholders has been one of his greatest strengths. As he explained, the teachers, parents, and the community have been actively participating in the development of schools. Nevertheless, he observed that there are tensions raised by the overlapping powers between the local and central governments. For instance, the management of teacher transfer and promotions falls under the central government.

Despite these challenges in the institutions, the need to have dialogue and shared ownership in the handling of the SMC, in particular when there are conflicting interests, was stressed. There is a reliance on the committee to take the lead in important sectors.

"I empower them by allowing them to make decisions on matters such as HRM and infrastructures. It assists in promoting trust and avoiding friction."

His leadership is a recognition and capacity building based style. He has established systems of awards for the Best Teacher, the Best Parent, and the Best Student in his attempt to create high morale and motivation rates. Further on, he has made sure to have teacher trainings, leadership roles in school departments, and financed by the school.

The headteacher has observed that leadership style has changed over the years significantly. During his youthful career as a teacher, leadership in the school was rather authoritarian with the focus on control and punishment. There has been a significant change in more empowering and participative types of leadership.

"In the past, leadership was very autocratic. Now, it is about encouragement. I follow a simple approach: First I do, then we do, and finally you do."

From his experience, he concluded that transparency, teamwork, and distributed leadership are essential for effective school governance. He believes that giving ownership to others builds long-term commitment.

"It has to be a transparent process. Others should be given ownership. I have got support from all around, and that keeps me going." Overall, the description of Head teacher 2 is seen as a combination of a visionary leadership approach and ground-level collaboration. It is worth mentioning the manner in which the personal experiences of Head teacher 2 characterize the job of head teachers in Nepal.

Head Teacher 3

Head Teacher 3 is the head teacher of a high school in rural Nawalparasi with about 1300 students. He took up the leadership mantle with a high desire to work toward the success of the school. He shared how his decision-making has evolved with the years through experience, problem-solving, and consultation with the community.

He narrates, "When I first assumed the head teacher position, I was a bit hesitant to directly present agendas in the SMC meetings. I was afraid the stakeholders would feel that I was imposing my views upon them. So, I used to request other members informally to introduce the agendas during the course of meetings beforehand. Only afterwards did I gain the confidence to present the agendas myself."

As head teacher for the first time, he was fresh into leadership and insecure. He had himself decided not to be at the forefront to assume authority, instead allowed others, especially the SMC, PTA, and teachers, to bring agendas in the meetings. He understood how other people could perceive him and did not want to come across as an autocratic leader. It allowed him to build up trust and gradually get to know the internal workings of the school. As time went on and he became more confident and built stronger relationships, he became more active in meetings, engaging fully with discussion and decisions.

"To maintain transparency and meet legal requirements, I call formal SMC meetings and make sure proper minutes are recorded."

He insisted that all decisions, however small, had to pass through a formal process. Members wrote and signed minutes of meetings to avoid any future legal issues. It shows his sense of responsibility and his watchfulness in following the procedures of the Education Act and other formal processes. His awareness of legal and procedural responsibility is key to how he leads.

"While selecting teachers funded by the school's private resources, I often face pressure through phone calls from individuals urging me to appoint their preferred candidates. Managing such situations is quite challenging."

Like many school leaders in Nepal, his leadership is not without challenges. One of the biggest challenges that he faces is political pressure during the recruitment of teachers in school's private source. The political stakeholders do not interfere once the recruitment process is completed. But their interference at the beginning creates a huge amount of stress. Other challenges that he faces are maintaining discipline among students and staff, dealing with teacher transfer and managing capital expenditure budgets.

"I believe participatory decision-making is important for making good and acceptable decisions, so I encourage all stakeholders to take part in the meetings."

Nevertheless, he is sure that decision-making can be simplified when all the stakeholders are involved. He attempts to make meetings interactive and participatory by engaging teachers, SMC, PTA, and even parents when distributing results. He has also established a good rapport with the community he lives in by allowing the use of the school playground by the youth clubs. This has generated goodwill and collective responsibility for the well-being of the school.

Although he believes in the involvement, he is aware of the fact that in some instances, the head teacher will take charge of the meetings. He is not hesitant to confess that there are moments when the leadership, which is strong, is necessary to make things happen. He is a hands-on leader, works collectively, and dictates where needed.

"Being fair, unbiased, and financially transparent as a head teacher is very important for overcoming challenges."

When asked how he copes with challenges, he highlighted fairness, integrity in financial matters and building an effective team. Though he has not developed written policies and procedures to solve problems, he handles problems based on the situation, applying his experience and judgment. He believes in building a "core team" of trusted staff and involving the community in order to solve the challenge. Personal relationships, local context, and the day to day realities of school life clearly shape his leadership.

Towards the ending of this conversation, he reflected on the challenges still faced in the decision-making process. These may include political interference, a lack of cooperation from teachers, inadequate participation of the community, a lack of resources, and conflicts of interest among stakeholders. These are challenges not only faced by his school, but also prevalent in most schools in Nepal.

What is striking in his narrative is the way in which he has evolved into his role. His leadership is more confident, based on community engagement, and context-dependent. His decisions are based not only on policy and procedure but also on people, trust, and experience. His journey shows how school leadership in Nepal is as much about procedure as it is about relationships, managing expectations, and operating in between collaboration and command.

In the end, Head Teacher 3's narrative reminds us that decision-making in schools is not a one size fits all procedure. It is deeply human in nature and often influenced by the local environment, social influences, personal philosophies and the leaders' perceptions.

Head Teacher 4

The story of Head Teacher 4 reflects leading a large school of students in a rural area of Putalibazar Municipality, Syangja district; he shared how his decision-making practices have evolved over time through experiences, challenges, and community engagement.He explains the way decisions are made in his school. Classrooms at the school begin with Early Childhood Development (ECD) and end with Grade 10. Being the head teacher underlines that a participatory approach guides the school's activities.

He narrates, *"I view decision-my opinion is that making the right decisions in a school setting involves teachers cooperating, being clear, and organizing their processes. We focus on involving all important stakeholders in every major decision at our school- teachers, the School Management Committee (SMC), parents, and students—this way, schools are managed inclusively and everyone is well informed."*

He states that the process usually begins by pinpointing the main issues and priorities at the institution. Plans for meetings are made according to those requirements, and at times, issues come from teachers or the SMC. As soon as the meeting agenda is ready, notice and circulars are given to all stakeholders to prepare them beforehand. Having this approach means that each person has all the information needed before the meetings.

"We also have scheduled meetings to host staff and SMC gatherings to discuss important topics such as our academic plan, campus improvement, finances, and student concerns. Everyone takes part in expressing themselves, and group decisions are made through reaching agreement together."

The decisions are recorded in official records and signed by the appropriate people to keep things visible and responsible.

The school uses mobile messaging applications and emails to increase communication and make things easier. With such tools, all things are at hand instantly, opinions are heard, and past session decisions are clarified. He thinks that using these tools has simplified decision-making and made it easier and more convenient. In reflecting on the institutional framework, he notes, *"School Management Committees (SMCs) play a key role in the management of Community schools in Nepal. Established under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2018) and Local Government Operation Act (2017), SMCs are constitutionally obligated to plan and manage schools focusing especially on decentralization and community participation."*

"One key challenge," he says*, "is the lack of sufficient budget for school education. Resource constraints often limit the implementation of decisions, no matter how well-conceived they are."*

He also points out that, despite the legal framework, local authorities do not always consult the SMCs when executing policies at the school level, which weakens community involvement and undermines the principle of decentralization. Citing the study by Jung & Shiwakoti (2018), he states that the school leaders don't just make educational decisions in Nepal; many people participate in this process. More and more, teachers, parents, and community members are involved in non-administrative matters. Involving them in planning and coordination guarantees better management in schools.

Despite all these constraints, he is fully committed to participatory leadership. *"We're working towards building a culture where all stakeholders—regardless of their background—feel empowered to contribute. We continually strive to do better by enhancing communication, capacity development among the committee members, and aligning our practices with national education policies."*

Conclusion

This study explores day to day decision-making experience of head teachers of community secondary schools of Nepal. Leading a school is a challenging job for the head teachers. It is because of limited resources, political pressures and limited support from teachers, parents, and local government. Nepal's major education policy, like the School Education Sector Plan (2022–2032), promotes participatory and decentralized decision-making. However, putting these policies into practice is very hard. Every school has its unique problem and the head teachers have to employ combinations of leadership strategies to cope with them. Sometimes they consult broadly and decide together but decide alone in emergencies or politically sensitive circumstances. This flexibility assists them in coping with the stresses of daily life but does not necessarily assist in inclusive leadership in every case.

The findings reveal that the head teachers have high regard for openness, honesty, obedience to law and community engagement. However, they are faced with challenges like unclear roles, low levels of community engagement and bureaucratic lag. Such limitations affect efficient leadership as well as the development of an inclusive nature of school culture.

Nepalese school leadership is not always top-down. It requires political intelligence, emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity. In the head teachers' interest, the research recommends continuous professional learning, more consistent policy documentation, increased use of technology and improved communication among all the stakeholders.

The research offers rich data on education leadership under challenging conditions through a focus on grassroots decision-making and inclusion and equity. In the coming years, research and policy interventions must strive to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Building cooperative leadership, streamlining capacity-building programs, and strengthening accountability measures will be key to Nepal's schools ensuring equitable and quality education for each child.

Implications

This study illustrates that Nepalese head teachers often have to make decisions in sensitive situations. For political reasons, limited resources, and sometimes rigid regulations, they cannot always follow the ideal "group decision" approach to the letter. They become pragmatic instead, taking some decisions independently in the interest of efficiency, typically under emergent situations, while trying to engage teachers, parents, and members of the community to the extent feasible for greater school matters. This means that our presumption of how school principals work needs to be more practical and adaptable in response to the real demands they face daily within a setting such as Nepal. Therefore, the future wave of research has to study intensively how leaders can balance such demanding demands and yet try to be fair and listen to all stakeholders.

Because head teachers are struggling with these challenges, they need much better support to do their jobs well. First, policymakers must make the rules clearer and simpler so that head teachers know what they can decide and how to involve others in the right way, and protect them from unfair political interference. Second, head teachers will need useful training in rules, not just in people-gathering, conflict resolution, and using simple technology to share information easily. Finally, parents, SMC members, and the community also need help understanding their role in the school so that they can participate in decisions more effectively. By giving head teachers this kind of practical help and protection, schools in Nepal can make better decisions and get closer to offering a good education for every child.

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Collaboration for fostering learners' autonomy in the EFL classroom: Learners' perceptions and practices

Hari Raj Atreya
Lecturer
Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal, Kathmandu

Abstract

The study examined the collaborative practices employed in EFL classrooms and their impact on fostering learner autonomy. To investigate the issue, the researcher formulated the following research questions: How do collaborative practices in EFL classrooms contribute to fostering learner autonomy? And what collaborative practices are useful in promoting learner autonomy among EFL students? The qualitative approach was employed in the study. The constructivist paradigm was followed to explore the practices and perceptions. Narrative inquiry was used in the study. Four participants were purposively chosen from one of the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University, studying in their fourth year of the Bachelor of Education program, and had experience practicing collaboration in classroom activities. The main finding showed that collaborative work enhanced learners' autonomy. Engagement in groups and collaboration among peers developed confidence and independence among the learners. The study results showed that learners were aware of the final evaluation system, which hindered fostering autonomy. Similarly, they were worried about the work of collaborative partners.

Keywords: Collaboration, learners' autonomy, EFL classroom

Introduction

Learners' autonomy is the ability to take charge of their learning. Frankfurt (2018) explores, in his essay "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," the need for freedom to act independently in order to have moral and purposeful responsibility. In learner autonomy, the focus is on the learner and their goals, with responsibilities. Consequently, many observers observed the development and promotion of learner autonomy as primarily an effort that would take place within their learners (Dam, 2003). Frankfurt (2018) focuses more specifically on the account of acting voluntarily and explores aspects of its situational relationship to causal determination. The pioneer of learners' autonomy theory, Holec (1981), explained that the adult education system should serve as a tool for increasing awareness among learners and promoting liberation in mankind, and, in some contexts, as a tool for changing the learning environment. As in the idea that theory suggests a man is a byproduct of his or her society, and man's ideas serve as a generator for his society.

In this modern era, learners have extensive access to online resources. They consult resources on digital platforms and come to class with the content and related information. They are capable of classroom interactions. As Benson (2001) states, autonomy is the multi-dimensional construction of one's ability and capacity that shapes different identities for every individual. It also has multiple forms for the same person in multiple situations and times. Autonomy is an essential and mandatory factor that must be employed and adopted in any language classroom. Nunan (2000) explains that classroom-based research on learners' autonomy focuses on developing multiple aspects and areas of language learning, including strategies, outcomes, and learning styles. Students will gain sufficient sources of information and understanding of their own ethnic and socio-cultural identity, as well as related information, which can inform their further learning purposes and planning. Autonomous learners are observed as those who can critically reflect on their experiences and learning through their knowledge and experience of learning achievements. They prefer to learn through multiple collaborations among learners (Holec, 1981; Allwright, 1990). However, when I observed them inside the classroom, they expressed hesitation about participating in various activities. When I divide the class into many groups and assign tasks, they are happy to discuss among the group. However, when I ask them to interact with issues individually, they are not interacting. The issue strikes me repeatedly, making me realize the importance of the group. I frequently observe them smiling, happy, communicating, interacting, and sharing freely in the groups. I believe such interactions can contribute to learners' autonomy. We at the simple-to-complex approach, where

simple group activities can also contribute to building personal confidence, is effective. Forming groups in classroom activities builds confidence and existence to promote autonomous practices in learners.

Learners' autonomy is an approach in language teaching that facilitates learners in enhancing their learning outcomes both inside and outside the classroom. It means students acknowledge their potential role in building their learning. It helps them understand their own needs, and they independently set their objectives. Learners' autonomy is a key component of the learning process that involves strategies to support learning outcomes. Both facilitators and learners may have a crucial role in promoting learners' autonomy. Facilitators can contribute to task choice, focusing tasks, and orientation to resources both inside and outside the classroom, such as in the library or learning centers. They may encourage on-task behavior and provide constructive feedback on learning goals. Sinclair (2000) explains that a learner's autonomy is a process that involves the learner taking charge of their responsibility for autonomous learning.

On the other hand, learners are in a key determining position in the learning process. They are involved in their decisions related to their learning objectives. They are actively involved in arranging classroom settings and facilitating discussions. They can diagnose their need and identify their strengths and weaknesses. They can learn, discuss, and work independently, interdependently, and cooperatively. They can choose tasks, resources, and activities on their own.

Chong & Reinders (2025) found in their systematic review that learners' autonomy has remained a significant topic for the last four decades. The conceptualization of the approach was based on a constructivist framework. Assessment of autonomy heavily relies on perceived measures, such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations, so the development of an explicit framework for autonomy is necessary. Thus, this study focused on the perceptions, understanding, and practices of learners' autonomy in the EFL classroom.

Collaborative learning in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom involves students working together in small groups or pairs to achieve a shared learning goal. It emphasizes interaction, cooperation, and mutual support among learners to develop their language skills. Dillenbourg (1999, cited in Ezekoka & Gertrude, 2015) described cooperative and collaborative learning as situations where more than one individual or group learn or aims to learn some ideas collaboratively. Language learning is the result of different collaborative

learning. Peer and group interactions are the primary methods and techniques for fostering learning outcomes and achievements. The common understanding and acceptance among teacher educators, educational practitioners, and researchers is that collaborative learning modes are beneficial for fostering learners' autonomy (Feri & Erlinda, 2014; Jacobs & Shan, 2016; Loh & Ang, 2020). This method focuses on students' engagement in group discussions, role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and peer reviews. Practicing these activities allows learners to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English while benefiting from one another's knowledge, perspectives, and feedback. Collaborative learning also fosters critical thinking, communication skills, and cultural awareness, making it a valuable strategy for language acquisition.

The study examined the collaborative practices employed in EFL classrooms and their impact on fostering learner autonomy. To investigate the issue, I formulated the following research question: How do collaborative practices in EFL classrooms contribute to fostering learner autonomy? What collaborative practices are useful in promoting learner autonomy among EFL students?

Purpose and research

The study had the purpose of investigating more on collaborative practices held in EFL classrooms at the University level. It aimed to explore how collaborative practices enhance the autonomous practices and activities among the learners. Further, it had also identified the challenges for fostering autonomous practices in qualitative studies through a constructivist approach to connect collaborative learning practices and developing learners' autonomy in the EFL classroom.

Methods of the study

This study was conducted with a qualitative approach. The interview guidelines served as the primary tool for data collection. The research site was one of the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. The study employed a constructivist paradigm to interpret the data collected from the participants. The participants of the study were major English students from the B.Ed. fourth year. The participants were selected through the purposive sampling procedure. Four students were selected through purposive sampling, which involves intentionally selecting samples with specific characteristics or qualities that align with the research objectives (Coyne, 1997; Koerber & McMichael, 2008). The selection criteria were that the students had participated in different collaborative activities. Collaboration was utilized in classroom interactions,

discussions, classwork, project work, and assignments. Before participating in the data elicitation, all participants signed a consent form declaring that their participation was voluntary. The researcher guaranteed the confidentiality of the participant that the data collected would not be disclosed or misinterpreted. The study participants were pseudonymously identified as S1, S2, S3, and S4 for the purposes of analysis and other study-related purposes. The interview guideline questions were established based on the study's objectives and research questions, which centered on students' collaboration to enhance learners' autonomy strategies and activities. The interviews were recorded in audio format, and the researcher transcribed those interview sessions into orthography for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

A qualitative analysis followed Braun & Clarke's (2006) model to develop themes, analysis, and interpretation. Firstly, familiarization with the data and transcription of the interview of verbal data was done. It was done through the member's review of the transcribed data. Secondly, initial codes were generated from the data by following the in vivo coding approach (Saldana, 2016). Then, themes were developed from the initial codes to theorize the perceptions and practices of learners' autonomy. After that, the themes were finalized with a revisit to the themes. Then, themes were finalized for the study. Finally, the reporting of the research work was done.

Findings and discussion

In this section of the study, findings were presented along with a discussion. The responses obtained from the interview guidelines were discussed in relation to the study's research objectives and questions, as well as the themes identified through the coding process, based on the research objectives and questions of the study. Firstly, the perceptions of university students toward fostering learner autonomy were presented. This includes how they connect collaboration to enhance learner autonomy and their expectations of autonomous learners. Next, they adopted their experiences of collaborative work during classroom activities, assignments, and project work to engage. Finally, challenges to fostering learner autonomy are identified to improve future teaching and learning practices.

Perception of students toward collaborative learning

As I interviewed the participants discussing collaborative learning, they explored that collaboration made them active in language learning. They stated that when the teacher assigned a task to be completed in the group, we collaborated with friends, which was useful for enhancing learning.

Collaboration for confidence

Factors of student independence include the students' role, which includes motivation and learning goals, the teachers' role, which consists of the teacher as facilitator, the teacher as source, and the teacher as control, the task for supporting students' autonomous learning, and the environment to support students' autonomous learning (Muhammada, 2024). Learners' collaboration helped develop confidence, which in turn evolved into autonomy. We can examine the following excerpts from participants on collaboration, confidence, and fostering learners' autonomy.

S2 asserted that *once our group was assigned to develop a research tool on the topic "Strategies used by the teachers to teach guided writing at a basic level," we worked together for three days and developed a tool for the research, which brought our group members closer together. We learned together; it was fun to work in a group. I developed my confidence and self-learning ability in the group.*

I also had a similar type of story when I was a B.Ed. First-year student. Our teacher asked us to write a paragraph in standard English. We wrote the paragraph, and then he divided the class into five groups, asking each group to discuss the topic and come up with a final and edited paragraph. Then, we worked on the group, which was fun learning and helped me develop my confidence.

S4 uttered that *when I worked with a peer for micro-teaching purposes, the feedback provided by my peer was memorable in my learning. He gave me the feedback that you make material that much more engaging because you can display it and speak on it, so you will not have problems with the content and will have no problem forgetting it while presenting. This feedback has always worked in my teaching career as well.*

S1 and S2 asserted that *they feel at ease working in a peer or group because there is no threat of a teacher. They feel at ease because the group members use simple vocabulary and clear examples, making collaborative work accessible to every individual learner.*

To some extent, learners created a sense of distance to share with the teachers, so they enjoyed working in collaboration with their peers. This collaboration made them confident enough to share their plans, objectives, and goals. Cooperative and collaborative learning is a philosophy of interaction in a learning group where people take responsibility for their own

learning while recognizing their peers' abilities and contributions (Chowdhury, 2021). So, working with collaboration enhanced the learner's capacity and confidence.

Collaboration for autonomy

Autonomy is the self-initiation for learning. Learners these days have plenty of resources for learning. Web-network and other related digital tools can assist learners from multiple perspectives. For those who utilize classroom practices, classroom activities, and discussions are equally important. Classroom discussion and interactions are possible only in collaborative work. The integration of self-assessment and motivation into the language learning process may help increase learner autonomy (Artut, E., & Gazioğlu, M., 2023).

S1 asserted that *working in a group or with peers encourages us to consult many more resources online or in the library, thereby building our knowledge and making us more informed and directed in our learning. So, collaboration means developing autonomy on our own*.

Autonomy cannot be enhanced in isolation or a vacuum. It is developed with effort and determination. So, the learner's autonomy is a collaborative effort.

S3 said that *deciding on our destination is not easy, so we need help or guidelines from others as well, especially for friend circles in the classroom or peer collaboration matters. Suppose we work in a group or with peers. In that case, we will have plenty of time to improve ourselves and be guided to our destination, developing autonomy through collaboration*.

Autonomy is not freedom where one is perfect enough to decide on one's own; rather, learning can be more effective with the guidance and counseling of a peer or group.

S2 and S4 agreed with S3's view. They sought *help and guidance from their friends as milestones to decide on the future directions*.

Learners felt it was easy to interact and collaborate in groups. The group was homogeneous, so they easily shared their understandings and proposed for further planning as well. The collaborative inquiry helped establish a community of learning, whereby students supported each other emotionally and cognitively, and they collectively wanted to achieve well (Zhong, 2021). So, Collaboration enhanced learners' autonomy and directed them to their learning goals and purposes.

Challenges for Fostering Autonomy

The word autonomy is a relative word. We need to measure autonomy by comparing it to the past situation. By this time, creating challenges to current classroom practices and fostering learners' autonomy is challenging. First, we must create a classroom environment that allows students to easily participate and explore their ideas and plans. The current classroom practices, pedagogies, settings, and inherent psychology among the students are the main challenges to fostering autonomy. The students are not fully prepared to take responsibility for their learning, which arises from a lack of motivation, fear of failure, and a deficiency in language acquisition, thereby impeding their capacity to demonstrate proficiency (Charef, H., 2024). A lack of sufficient resources, motivation, and readiness among learners affects the fostering of learners' autonomy. Some fixed systems that learners need to follow during the course completion period are another challenge, as they require learners to foster their autonomy in the ELE classroom. The following is the direct verbatim evidence to support the developed theme by the researcher.

S1 asserted that *it is challenging to direct our learning because we have such a fixed annual examination system, so we need to follow teachers' directions; otherwise, we fail the examination*.

S2 was in line with S1 and says that *if we decide on our learning, who will evaluate, qualify, and upgrade us? Okay, we can collaborate with the course facilitators and comprehend the contents in our own way and style. However, we cannot ignore the system prescribed by the university, so it is not easy to decide for ourselves*.

Every learner faces challenges in learning, but challenges are different according to individual differences and abilities. **S3** asserted that *collaboration is a phenomenon, but if the collaborating partner does not contribute to the group, it becomes a problem for the partner. The task is also assigned for evaluation, so the partner's contribution poses a challenge in fostering autonomy in collaborative work*.

S4 said that *if we entirely decide on our own learning, then we may not have an explicit orientation on the course. Without guidance and direction, we may become disoriented. So, autonomy is a challenge for me*.

Multiple purposes guided learning; learners were compelled to pass examinations and earn grades, so they were oriented to the curriculum and the guidance of their teachers.

Application of learner-centered methods; the willingness of students to take responsibility for their learning (Romanyshyn, I., & Freiuk, I., 2024). Fostering the learner's autonomy in the language classroom became a challenge.

Key insights

After the completion of the study, the major take away is that collaboration in the EFL classroom functions as a positive agent for the enhancement of learners' autonomy. Collaborations build confidentiality and independence for autonomous learning activities and behaviours. At the same time, fixed assessment and examination systems have limited learners from taking responsibility for their learning. Collaborative activities build confidence, support for learning, and develop autonomy. Collaborative practices have promoted autonomous related competencies in learners and are useful for building inner capacities, but, at the same time, an inflexible evaluation system and structures have limited collaborative practices in the EFL classroom.

Conclusion and implications

A qualitative approach was employed to explore learners' perceptions of autonomy, yielding three themes: collaboration for confidence, collaboration for independence, and the challenges of fostering autonomy, which were derived from the collected data. The sub-theme, such as discussion in groups, enhanced confidence among the learners. The collaborative work and results made learners more independent, and individual and group presentations further enhanced their independence. Learners were aware of the final evaluation system, which hindered fostering autonomy. Similarly, they were worried about the work of collaborative partners. The findings show that collaborative work enhanced learners' autonomy. Engagement in groups and collaboration among peers developed confidence and independence among the learners. Although such a small-scale qualitative study may not be applicable or generalizable in other settings, it may serve as a reference.

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Examining the Connection between Quality Education and Employability: Insights from Educators and Individuals

Kabi Adhikari Thapaliya[1]* & Nathu Ram Chaudhary PhD[2]

1. Faculty of English, Shepherd College, Purbanchal University, kabi.keni@gmail.com,
2. PhD, Faculty of Education, Far Western University, nathuramsir@gmail.com,
   *corresponding author: Kabi Adhikari Thapaliya, *kabi.keni@gmail.com*

Abstract

The widespread notion, among both the public and scholars, is that developing countries like Nepal experience disparities in educational quality. Issues are regularly flagged in this regard at the policy level, academia, media, and public forums. Nevertheless, there is no research-based discourse about what "quality" means and how it is designed and implemented in different domains. In the case of Nepal, which this article focuses on, it is often presumed that education in public schools is outmoded, impractical, limited in hands-on training, and lower in standards compared to that in private schools. Therefore, the core objective of this study is to examine the nexus between quality education and occupational skills, drawing insights from educators and individuals. This article reviews a literature review and analysis of data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to develop a framework for describing and discussing quality education in the context of Kathmandu, Nepal. Anchored in the interpretivist paradigm, this study employs an interpretative phenomenological methodology to explore and elucidate the lived experiences of the participants. The findings depict that good teaching, a supportive learning environment, and active involvement in extracurricular activities play a significant role in providing quality education, which helps students become professionally competent.

Keywords: Outcome-based education, Graduate Employability, Institutional collaborations, career pathways

Introduction

Quality education is one of the global requirements for Sustainable Development and a main aim of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4). The general talk, which is also supported by the scientific community, claims that countries in the process of development, such as Nepal, are still struggling to provide educational quality. The notion of quality education has been conceptualised in various international policy frameworks, characterizing different aspects of it, such as access, inclusion, and relevance through learner-centred pedagogy and measurable learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2015). The idea of quality education, in this case, is fair, inclusive, and effective learning that would prepare all learners with the necessary skills for the fast-changing world.

Nepal's education system is so intricately involved and debated that the discourse on educational quality is quite complex (Khaniya, 2007; World Bank, 2020). According to public opinion, government schools are usually described as old-fashioned, overly theoretical, and lacking in the practical or skill-based aspects of education (MOE, 2019; UNESCO, 2022). These establishments are often thought to be less competitive than their private counterparts, both nationally and internationally (Bhatta, 2011). Such comparisons are mostly based on the education levels of the most developed countries, which are considered as models for the less developed ones. However, these models are mostly dependent on policy speeches or assumptions that have not been tested, rather than on measurable learning outcomes or locally relevant indicators of success.

The reality is quite the opposite and even challenges the dominant perception of public schools in Nepal as underperforming. As a matter of fact, public school graduates have been able to make their mark in higher education, public administration, diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and political leadership, in spite of the harsh criticisms. Therefore, it can be said that public institutions, despite their modest performance on standardized academic metrics, are the main agents of social mobility and civic participation. Mathema and Bista (2006) stated that students coming from private schools generally perform better than those from public schools when it comes to standardized examinations; however, public schools should not be overlooked as they are more inclusive and accessible, particularly to students coming from rural areas and those who are economically or socially disadvantaged.

Carney and Bista (2009) also argue that the societal role of public education in Nepal goes beyond academic performance, thus helping to raise civic awareness, resilience, and

adaptability qualities in students coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Public education produced Nepal's political and bureaucratic leaders, which is an example that educational quality cannot be summed up by numerical measures only. On the other hand, private schools, which are usually seen as providers of better education, may in fact limit students' exposure to social diversity, thus limiting their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

According to Dhungana (2020), quality education is the "implementation of elite standards for curriculum (what learners learn), environment (quality of school facilities and necessary support for learners), pedagogy (learning process), and learning outcomes (application of learning in life and for a better life)". A growing number of studies have dissected the facets of educational quality, stressing both input factors, such as infrastructure, curriculum design, and teacher qualifications and output factors like learning achievement, employability, and lifelong learning (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2015). Nonetheless, the number of articles that have sufficiently elaborated on the perceptibility of educational quality in relation to employability, especially in Nepal, is still small.

Concerns over the quality of education have been raised time and again in policy-making circles in Nepal, academic institutions, media, and public forums. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of conceptual clarity and a consensus informed by research as to what "quality" means in different sociocultural and institutional settings. This theoretical ambiguity leads to fundamental questions about quality education, such as what its essential elements are, how it can be gauged, evaluated, and compared across systems, and to what extent these gauges depend on or are independent of context.

These points emphasize the necessity for a nuanced, contextually based model to delineate, evaluate, and enhance the standard of education. The model should move beyond simply comparing public and private schools and also consider the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of education. Using this broader approach can help policymakers, educators, and researchers gain a fairer and clearer understanding of the quality of education in Nepal and other developing countries.

This study explores the link between educational quality and employability through the perspectives of educators and graduates in Nepal. It examines key aspects of education, including infrastructure (classroom facilities and learning resources), teaching effectiveness, students'

holistic development, social and political factors, language of instruction, and technology integration."

This study seeks to understand how different aspects of education influence graduates' employment outcomes. It presents a model to examine the extent to which various factors of educational quality shape individuals' career paths and societal contributions. The research also explores how graduates connect their personal and professional development to their educational experiences. Positioned within ongoing debates on redefining quality education in developing countries, the study uses an interpretative phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of individuals from diverse educational settings and assess how these experiences affect their views on educational quality and employability. Dahal et.al. (2025) assert that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for equipping individuals with the necessary skills to thrive in the competitive job market and are instrumental in the economic development of the nation by creating a link between academic learning and the workforce needs. There is no doubt that providing high-quality education is a powerful lever of employment as it equips students with the skills and competencies required for success in the labour market.

The research project is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent do the most talked about quality education indicators affect the actual experiences and future opportunities of high school graduates?

2. What connections between quality education and personal/ career development do the graduates draw?

3. How do the experiences of graduates reveal the connection between quality education and life outcomes?

Literature Review

The idea of providing quality education has been a popular subject for research and debate among scholars over time, and different scholars have continually provided varying perspectives which take into account historical, cultural, and educational aspects. For example, Hilliard (1978) considers that the achievement of quality education for all necessitates educators to face up to systemic injustices like racism and domination. He affirms that good teaching and learning are possible if these obstacles are directly confronted. On the other hand, Mortimore and

Stone (1991) see the biggest problem with the term 'quality' being that its meaning is very different depending on which groups of stakeholders you ask. Even though it is a controversial concept, they go so far as to say that some measurable aspects like institutional performance and learner outcomes can be utilized to evaluate the level of educational quality. Moreover, Stark and Lowther (1980) disagree with the idea that quality should be evaluated at only three different levels, suggesting instead that these levels are also interconnected: individuals (students and staff), departments (academic and administrative units), and institutions, and thus being able to cover the entire assessment framework by taking into account all these layers.

Dhungana (2020) relates the discussion of quality education to the South Asian environment and marks it as a vital developmental issue. He remarks that the condition of quality education in South Asia is far below that of wealthy countries because of systemic contradictions and resource disparities. To begin with, he conceptualizes quality education through four interlinked aspects: curriculum, environment, pedagogy, and outcomes, stressing that the deficiency of these factors' harmony leads to the decline of the educational quality. His model is very much in tune with the one that UNICEF

Wani and Mehraj (2014) put forth the point of view that teaching and learning entail several essential criteria, namely the qualifications of teachers, instructional design, school management, technology integration, class size, and institutional climate. They also acknowledge that many schools are inadequately equipped and face challenges in implementing these standards within diverse socio-political contexts. Likewise, Akareem and Hossain (2016) claim that maintaining quality in higher education relies on the existence of robust quality assurance systems that promote academic integrity and ensure institutional accountability.

One of the main points of gender perspectives inclusion in the conversation of education quality has been that, besides Aikman, Halai, and Rubagiza (2011) also believe that quality education should go beyond fair resource distribution and deal with gendered experiences in the classrooms. They insist that the quality of education cannot be fully recognized without understanding how gender stereotypes in society and institutions affect the participation, motivation, and achievements of students.

Kraft (2022) perceives quality education as a construct that depends on subjectivity and varies from one context to another. He argues that quality perceptions differ between individuals and cultures and thus more insightful measuring instruments need to be developed in order to

educational quality measurement to remain respectful towards both global standards and local realities. In his point of view, quality education is better understood when looked at from the perspective of the learner and the community, and it should be focused on the knowledge, skills, and soft competencies that lead to meaningful and productive lives.

Another important theme that emerges is the connection between educational quality and employability. Although numerous studies have examined education quality at national and global levels, relatively few have explored how it directly influences access to employment opportunities. Dhungana (2020) thinks that the acquisition of formal qualifications is only part of the way towards career prospects; apart from that, people have to be equipped with relevant skills and the capability to transfer theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Hence, quality education goes beyond just providing learners with academic competence and grants them critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are indispensable to professional competence.

Viewing education from a philosophical perspective, Buttrick (1925) sees it as a continuous life journey through which one develops observation, thinking, and reflection skills. Therefore, education becomes an ongoing process of both intellectual and moral growth. Galtung (1990) takes it further by pointing out that education includes not only formal but also informal and non-formal learning which are influenced by the culture and environment. According to him, educational systems are not only shaped by the cultural and social aspects of the world but also by the ideological ones; thus religion, language, history, and nationalism are among the factors that have an influence on educational systems.

Pant (2016) also points out that formal education is only one side of the learning process, especially in rural areas, where informal and non-formal education can complement each other, with the role of one being more dominant than the other. Informal education, which is based on everyday experiences and local traditions, can support adult learning, attract local resources, and promote the participation of different groups. Non-formal education, on the other hand, is more concerned with sending messages through an experience which is outside the framework of the conventional schooling system. Both forms of education, according to Pant, are extensions of formal education as they pioneer the ideas of lifelong learning and the acquisition of practical knowledge.

The literature shows that quality education is a complex, evolving concept encompassing academic, social, cultural, and economic dimensions. It addresses what and how students learn, as

well as inclusiveness, relevance, and contextual adaptability. Despite global consensus, disparities persist in regions like South Asia due to systemic inequities. Nevertheless, quality education remains a crucial driver of individual empowerment, societal change, and sustainable development

Research Methodology

This study is grounded in an interpretive paradigm to explore how individuals derive meaning from their experiences. It examines the subjective and context-specific ways in which graduates perceive the relationship between their education and career outcomes. Furthermore, this research uses Human Capital Theory (HCT) as one of the sources, which was initially presented by Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961). It serves as a conceptual lens to examine the participants' experiences. Their accounts reveal that educational quality encompasses academic knowledge, STEM skills, soft skills, and digital literacy (OECD, 2018). The researchers adopted an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) to understand how people make sense of their lived educational and professional experiences (Creswell, 2013). This method is particularly useful for uncovering the nuanced perspectives and underlying meanings of education, employability, and success that may not be immediately apparent

The study was carried out in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, selected for its diverse socio-educational context. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling to represent a range of educational and professional backgrounds. The sample included professionals from various fields: four academicians providing insights into educational perspectives and pedagogical practices; two social science researchers offering analytical and research-oriented viewpoints; two entrepreneurs sharing experiences related to business and employment generation; two NGO professionals describing community-level and social development experiences; and two government officials highlighting policy and regulatory perspectives.

Graduates from both public and private schools were included to explore how educational background influences their success narratives. Six graduates participated in focus group discussions (FGDs), allowing for shared reflections on commonalities and differences in their educational experiences. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with individuals possessing expertise on the link between education and employability. The FGDs offered collective insights into shared experiences, perspectives, and meanings. This interpretative approach illuminated how participants perceive education, employability, and success,

emphasizing the impact of their educational experiences on career trajectories and societal contributions.

The study adhered to rigorous ethical standards, following principles of autonomy, informed consent, and confidentiality to safeguard the rights and well-being of participants (Resnik, 2020).

Results and Discussions

To examine the relationship between educational quality, its assessment, and employment outcomes, the study emphasized the roles of various stakeholders. Data were collected through 12 key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with multiple participants. This approach facilitated the exploration of three primary themes: teaching methods, school environment, and extracurricular activities. The ideas of the respondents reveal the interconnection of quality education and employment opportunities. Therefore, the outcomes derived from a thorough thematic analysis are recognized as different from the point of view of these three themes.

Methods of teaching

One of the main features of quality education is that it involves both teachers and students in finding out the truth, instead of allowing the falsification of the truth to help the continuation of the existing systems of power, privilege, or inequality. It creates an authentic and close relationship between a student's past and current experiences and the aims and practices of the educational system. Such education contributes to the growth of the student's strong personal, social, and cultural identity as it motivates them to consider themselves as original thinkers, not just followers.

The scientists put the question to the interviewees: Are the indicators of quality education interlinked with your institution? And were these skills taught in your institution? According to the statement of Informant A, the precise subthemes can be efficiently combined into two overall interpretive themes related to teaching methods and quality education. These two themes reflect the gist of their opinion while acknowledging the wealth of the original narrative:

Holistic and Pedagogical Practices Beyond Grades

Informant A (academician) disputed the conventional, grade-oriented views of quality education, pointing out that grades alone are not enough to serve as indicators. The informant, while conceding that academic performance can be a signal of intelligence, insisted on the necessity of going beyond the theoretical sphere to practical application, critical thinking, and life skills.

> "*Measures of quality education itself was a vague issue. However, there were definitely some components to be considered to maintain quality education. Professional development, economic development, socialization, life skills, critical thinking, the capacity to solve problems, and to explore new things were some major factors of quality education. Quality education enabled a person to sell in the market. In some cases, some had achieved success in their life even if they had not participated in the teaching learning process. In that sense, grade alone could not be the indicator of quality education. Definitely the class grade made one academically sound, and one became complete with the combination of quality education along with skills, development, practical education, and many others.*"

This account reflects a perspective of holistic pedagogy, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and vocational dimensions of learner development. From this standpoint, effective teaching should cultivate learners who are adaptable, socially competent, and prepared to navigate real-world challenges. The informant differentiates memorisation learners from visionary thinkers and implies that significant teaching practices should facilitate the development of students into the latter through applied learning, entrepreneurship, and self-exploration.

Furthermore, Informant C (Academician) expressed his ideas in this manner:

> "*The absence of a quality academic background does not preclude one from being economically sound. A well-educated entrepreneur, for example, could extend his vision and be future-oriented with a long-term vision and in a multidimensional way, but a businessman without an academic background might encounter difficulties in critical thinking.*"

This short story indicates the need for learner-centered, experiential teaching methods that include problem-solving tasks, project-based learning, entrepreneurial education, and reflective practices leading to personal and professional graduates' competencies. In this teaching approach, teachers are less involved in content delivery and more in facilitating students' transformation.

Quality Education as a Systemic and Contextual Process

Besides learner development, Informant A pointed out that quality education is not attributable to a single factor such as a teacher or a curriculum. It is rather a systemic process that depends on the support of the infrastructure, the institution, and the environment of education. It cannot be just one component of a particular organisation that is the determining factor of the education provision process, which is also equally important. He also emphasized the significance of physical conditions, such as school infrastructure and classroom furniture, as integral components of the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, he noted that physical infrastructure, along with the overall school environment and adequate classroom resources, plays a crucial role and should not be overlooked.

These observations suggest that effective teaching methods are context-dependent and constitute a complex interplay among educational philosophy, learning environments, teacher preparation, and institutional policies. Quality education is a coordinated, cooperative effort that not only focuses on the delivery process but also takes into consideration the structural conditions in which it happens. To ensure quality education, it is not possible for only one component of the particular organization to be the determining factor. The process of providing education is equally important as well. Physical infrastructure, including the school environment, suitable furniture for the class, and many other factors, plays an important role.

The Four C's: Reimagining Global Competence

Informant B, a social science researcher, stated that

> *"The Four C Framework stands for Collaboration, Creativity, Communication (online, internet), and Critical Analysis, and these are the four main components of quality education. The Four C Approach is undoubtedly the best way to create a perfect global citizen in the market. We are still facing challenges in transferring theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge. If that were not the case, the Nepal government would have*

implemented the best curriculum at the school level. Hence, practice-oriented teaching is
essential for ensuring quality education."

The informant's observation regarding the 'gap between theoretical and practical knowledge' highlights the persistent divide between the two in many educational systems, including Nepal, despite claims of a strong curriculum. Their emphasis on 'practice-based teaching' reflects a pedagogical approach that values real-world experience, experimentation, and hands-on learning as essential components of meaningful education. From an interpretative standpoint, the participant views education not merely as a vehicle for knowledge transmission but as a transformative process that develops learners into agile and reflective agents capable of navigating today's complex world. Quality education not only ensures that every student has an opportunity to enjoy the expression of their individuality and collective identity but also confirms each student's self-esteem and develops their ability to critically analyze the social, political, and environmental realities around them. And, it exposes each student to a broad variety of alternative cultural experiences in order to gain a sense of self which is accurate and non-oppressive (Hilliard, 1978).

Contextualizing Education in Societal Structures

One of the researchers asked a respondent how teaching learning activities and a favorable environment play an essential role in achieving quality education. Informant D from a non-governmental organization responded that

"We require education that is based on the societal structure. Previously, society was of a traditional type and was not technologically friendly. This is the way the education system was working and adjusting. But today's society has to be technically very strong, and this is the way the quality of education is gauged. If someone considers the link between quality education and physical strength, he/she can still do the work to which he/she belongs with only physical strength and without quality education. While, quality education is an extra resource to the people, and it not only extends the thinking area but also becomes one of the motivational factors to achieve the goal."

Effective teaching strategies can graduate students not only with academic knowledge but also with practical skills, critical thinking, and adaptability, which are very important for success in the labour market. According to UNESCO (2017), learner-centered pedagogies like collaborative learning, problem-solving, and experiential learning improve students' capacity to

grasp and apply concepts in the real world, which is a key feature of quality education. This informant understood that societal structures determine the delivery and reception of education. Their view is a phenomenological one that individuals are always historically, culturally, and technologically contextualized, which influences their access to and benefit from education.

Beyond Grades: Education as Social and Emotional Literacy

The Informant C from the Academia (government school) stated that

> *"It is commonly understood that better grading is indicative of quality education. However, the truth is that quality education can only be recognized when theoretical knowledge can be applied practically. This means that education should be social as well as practical. The good behavior of people is also a reflection of the education they have obtained. Quality education is also about understanding sympathy and empathy in life. If a person can understand others, and at the same time, make others understand his/her feelings, then that is quality education. A student gets quality education when he/she is able to ask questions and solve their problem on their own."*

The emphasis on students being able to "ask questions and solve their problems on their own" indicates a student-centred, inquiry-based pedagogical philosophy. This aligns closely with UNESCO's (2017) advocacy for learner-centred approaches that foster autonomy, agency, and adaptability. The informant highlights the role of emotional intelligence—such as empathy, compassion, and understanding others—in framing education as an ethical and moral endeavour. In this perspective, educational quality is assessed not only by academic or economic outcomes but also by the cultivation of socially conscious and compassionate individuals.

School Environment

The school environment is the main factor in determining quality education and influencing employment opportunities by shaping students' learning experiences, developing essential skills, and fostering socio-emotional growth. According to OECD (2018) schools with qualified and motivated teachers who create engaging and effective learning experiences that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning can perform better. Informant E (non-governmental officials) responded that

"Only when teachers are able to perceive the students' interests can quality education be realized, as the school plays a vital role in the skill and knowledge enhancement of the particular students. Normally, the grade obtained in the examination is the factor that elevates the level of study, but a grade is far from enough to compete in the free market. They should acquire the extra capacity to handle the situation, which they can get through extra activities. Therefore, different schools have different ways of delivering practical education depending on how they were taught beyond academic studies. Experience and education are two major components that make a student capable of various opportunities."

Public schools in Nepal are characterized by poor facilities and teacher absenteeism resulting in low student performance and hence, limited employability opportunities. On the other hand, community-managed schools have shown better performance due to local involvement (MOEST & UNESCO 2016). Informant F (one of the entrepreneurs) argued that

"Quality education is a major factor to an individual's professional growth, a source of economic improvement, a means of teaching good interpersonal relationship skills, a way of developing life skills, an aid for thinking and problem-solving skills, and a tool for new discovery. Besides, it also makes a person fit to succeed in the job market. Quality education was not only about memorizing facts but also about giving individuals the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for their personal and societal success. It became instrumental in poverty reduction, health promotion, equality enhancement, and the building of resilient communities, thus making it a prerequisite for sustainable development and economic prosperity."

The statement portrays quality education as having a profound and far-reaching impact on both individuals and society. It underscores that education goes beyond rote learning, representing a comprehensive process that equips learners with essential skills and knowledge to succeed across various aspects of life. In essence, it frames quality education as a transformative force that empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and drives progress at multiple levels. Moreover, it is a prerequisite for creating a better, more equitable, and prosperous world.

The Informant J and L from academia argued that the ability to convert learning into practice and the ability to critically analyze subject matter are main factors of quality education besides other factors such as quality in teaching, well-cultured, effectiveness, relevancy, and

many more. In addition, the point was also made that the key function of education was to produce knowledgeable and skilled citizens who could be competent global members and leverage the opportunities of globalization. However, the benchmark of a great score in the school leaving certificate as the main yardstick of quality education still exists in Nepali society, and practical and productive education is not a priority.

The Informant H (one of the government officials) also shared the view that quality might not be the same for all entities.

> *"It can be looked at from various angles. It could differ from one person to another, and it was determined by geography, places, and a lot of other factors and should be checked by the actual condition of the people living in the particular area. For instance, quality education in Humla and Jumla may not be similar to that of the capital city. Their main necessities for quality education may not even be the preferences of the people of Kathmandu."*

The point made by the statement is that quality education cannot be conceived as a single model that fits all. The idea and the necessities of quality education depend on perspectives, individual requirements and are influenced by factors such as location and geography. What is considered quality education in one place might be different in another because people's situations, priorities, and challenges vary. Likewise, informant I (social researcher) states that a good institution is the outcome of the collaboration of the team. Academic institutions can be instrumental in the skill and knowledge development of the students. Quality education is not achievable if schools fail to recognize the students' interests. By facilitating their skills and knowledge in accordance with their interests, schools can offer quality education. At the very least, schools can play an important role in making them recognize their interests and abilities to achieve their goals. The reason is, students are sometimes unable to recognize their abilities beyond academic knowledge. Moreover, quality education is another element to raise their capacity in their interests. Their interest then, becomes directly linked to career opportunities.

Extra Curricular Activities

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are instrumental in improving not only the quality of education but also the future employment prospects of the students. Though most of the time they are considered as secondary to academics, ECAs have a great impact on the allround development of the students as they help them to acquire those skills which are necessary for both

academic and professional fields. NACE 2021 mentions that extracurricular activities (ECAs) support students in developing skills such as teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, and project management, which are highly valued in the job market. In this context, Informant K (one of the entrepreneurs) stated that "we aim to provide international-level quality education in Nepal to keep students from going abroad to study."

One of the ways to guarantee quality education is to create an educational culture where students take part in holistic, meaningful, and innovative learning experiences with the support of a caring and collaborative learning community. Quality education is made up of different aspects such as a learning environment free of pressure, learning through play and with the use of open spaces, having proper school facilities, being surrounded by nature, providing children with a variety of extra-curricular activities for their overall development, recognizing their interests and creating a conducive environment by the teachers to make them innovative, the commitments of faculty members towards the entire development of the students, which easily attract parents and students to join such academic institutions.

ECAs provide individuals with confidence and social capital, which, in turn, help them to gain access to employment opportunities through the further development of their interpersonal skills as well as professional connections. The Informant G from a non-governmental organization had different experiences, which are as follows:

> *"Habits turned into nature. Besides problem-solving skills, educational institutions should be able to provide lifelong skills in order to acquire quality education. This experiential knowledge played a major role in making their life a lifelong process. Life skill programs, positive thought-provoking activities, and activities making students more responsible for their daily life are some of the additional measures that should be included in quality education. Activity-based education was quite important to make students fit for all sections of their lives."*

Quality education is supposed to help students build habits that will last them a lifetime, and it should equip them with practical skills, especially problem-solving skills, that will support them throughout life. Educational institutions must provide life skills programs and activities that promote positive thinking and responsibility among students. Activity-based learning is very important if the aim is to make students capable of handling all areas of their personal and professional lives.

The FGD experience of the informants reflects that quality education is the basis of social equity. It makes inclusive and equitable quality education and at the same time, it is an enabler of lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. It gives people the opportunity to develop all their qualities and skills and thus, to realise their potential as human beings. The indicators of quality education include a multitude of factors such as pedagogical improvement, the correct skill development, gender parity, well-equipped infrastructure, enough educational materials and resources, scholarships, and other essential elements. Since the indicators differ from one person to another, people also want to enhance school facilities, increase the number of training and vocational opportunities, and the number of trained teachers to create a safe school environment.

The researcher, during the whole study, noticed that most of the respondents were primarily focused on three key themes: teaching methods, school environment, and extracurricular activities. Nevertheless, some of them also talked about different facets of quality education, such as the fluency of the English language, cultural norms, holistic development, and public exposure.

Conclusion

The research embodied by an interpretive phenomenological perspective reveals that providing quality education should not be measured only in terms of academic achievement, as it is a complex, ever-changing, and very sensitive process dependent on the context. The results of this study convey that education with quality has to involve and energise both the teachers and the students by means of relevant, learner-centred pedagogies, thus achieving the development of critical thinking, skills of a practical nature, and the all-round growth of the individual being. It follows from these statements that education is expected not only to produce original thinkers but also to inject into society these thinkers' competencies, where their emotional intelligence, social adaptability, and preparation to face the challenges of the labour market and society of the post-industrial era are particularly highlighted. Innovative teaching methods that focus on applied learning, problem-solving, and experiential activities are the most important to quality education.

By means of these methodologies, the gap between academic theories and the practical world gets covered, thus learners are empowered to become critical thinkers, autonomous, reflective, and capable individuals. Furthermore, the research conveys an additional message that teachers and school syllabi cannot be regarded as the factors that are solely responsible for quality education, since it is a systemic phenomenon which is influenced by the support of institutions,

physical infrastructure, and the provision of a suitable environment for learning. The interrelation of those aspects forms the base where the two activities of effective teaching and learning are feasible.

The study further highlights the essential role of extracurricular programs and life skills curricula in fostering soft skills such as leadership, collaboration, empathy, and responsibility. These skills are crucial for nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of succeeding in both personal and professional domains. The findings indicate that, alongside cognitive development, social and emotional learning forms a key component of quality education, aligning with a broader vision that incorporates moral and cultural growth. The researchers also emphasize the importance of context-specific education, shaped by factors such as location, culture, and societal norms.

Quality education in remote or traditionally rooted areas may differ considerably from that in urban settings. Therefore, the study emphasizes the implementation of educational practices that are adaptable, contextually relevant, and responsive to the diverse needs of learners. This perspective challenges the notion of uniform standards and promotes equity through personalized approaches. Ultimately, the findings highlight the importance of collaboration among educators, institutions, policymakers, and local communities in developing inclusive, supportive, and resource-rich educational environments. Quality education is a joint effort that requires, among other things, continuous professional development, adequate infrastructure, and a culture of innovation and care.

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A Reflective Study on the Challenges of Supervising Undergraduate Research Projects in English Education

Krishna Prasad Katel

Lecturer

Solukhumbu Multiple Campus

Abstract

The reflective study examines the current issues in the supervision of undergraduate research project in English education in a community campus in Nepal. The study applies qualitative auto ethnographic and narrative inquiry methodologies to six years of supervisory experience with fourth-year Bachelor students to examine challenges of critical concern to research directions. The results indicate a general lack of academic preparedness among students, as they have minimal knowledge of how to conduct research, fail to engage with a topic deeply, and cannot use terms such as sampling and data collection. A culture of plagiarism and heavy reliance on internet sources is an indication of institutional failure to focus on academic integrity education. There is also inappropriate student attendance and submissions at the last moment, which further interferes with the continuity of supervision. There are also notable flaws in the methodological skills of students, as they cannot create research questions, select the appropriate tools, and comprehend the ethical issues; thus, the supervisor has the extra burden of instructing these principles. Supervisors are under emotional and professional pressure and tend to be frustrated and burned out, but the institutions are not aware of it. These are worsened by institutional loopholes, including lack of orientation programs, no clear supervision policies, and a poor research culture. The research proposes systemic solutions such as integrating research skills in the curriculum, institutional training of supervisors, and a campus-wide focus on research ethics and research participation as possible solutions to enhance the performance of students and the performance of the supervisors in under-resourced academic institutions.

Keywords: Supervision, Plagiarism, Reform, Reflective, Challenges

Introduction

Undergraduate research supervision is nowadays becoming a vital part of academic institutions all over the world because it is one of the key factors that help students to develop academically and intellectually. It offers students a chance to develop critical thinking, sharpen academic writing, and other skills of an independent inquiry that are crucial to academic success as well as lifelong learning (Brew & Mantai, 2017). Effective research supervision is particularly crucial in fields such as English education, where students are supposed to have the ability to synthesize theoretical and practical knowledge. Students should be taught not only what to learn but also how to conduct academic research, its methodological rigor, the literature review, data collection, and analysis. But in the developing world like Nepal, supervision of undergraduate research has its own different challenges, which are influenced by institutional, pedagogical, and student-related factors. Some campuses, particularly those in rural or semi-urban spaces, do not have the research infrastructure required, such as access to academic databases, research instruments, and supervisors with the associated training. This brings about a disjointed research atmosphere in which both the students and faculty are usually left alone to go through the research process without any proper guidance.

Additionally, there is a general feeling among students that undergraduate research is just a formal requirement towards graduation as opposed to a knowledge-gaining academic field study. Puri (2023) notes that students often come to research with a compliance-oriented attitude, and this attitude is associated with several issues, including the lack of clarity in research questions or their ill-constructed form, the overuse of secondary sources, and the propensity to repeat issues that have already been addressed without any critical focus. Such a mindset is a contributor to shallow work and it is a deterrent to the overall quality of undergraduate research. According to Elken and Wollscheid (2020), the students usually fail in designing valid research instruments, choosing the right methodology to gather data, and analyzing the findings. Their insecurities with regard to traversing the academic literature and applying analytical frameworks also make it hard to write rigorous academic work. It is common that these gaps are not properly discussed in the curriculum and students are not ready to be engaged in independent research work.

On the part of the supervisors, mentoring undergraduate research can prove to be thought-provoking and emotionally demanding. Supervisors are supposed to give directions, critical responses, and scholarly direction, but they often face the challenges of irregular

attendance by students, consultations at the last moment, and unwillingness to accept constructive criticism (Grant, 2003; Wisker and Robinson, 2016). These actions not only interfere with the research schedule, but also reduce the possibility of an effective academic conversation and reflexivity. Supervisors are therefore compelled to manage their duties of mentoring as well as their normal teaching duties without being appreciated or rewarded by the institution. Moreover, these difficulties are compounded by the lack of systematized training and institutionalized support of undergraduate research supervision. Rowley and Slack (2021) note that there is a necessity to conduct professional development programs, which will provide faculty with skills and strategies to assist students in the research process and support them. The training opportunities in Nepal are very limited, particularly in the community campuses that have less finances and resources. Consequently, supervisors tend to make use of their experiences and trial-and-error techniques, which might not necessarily result in such consistency and quality of results.

According to Puri (2024), a lack of research infrastructure and training of professionals in the Nepalese higher education is a major hindrance on the path of the creation of an effective research culture. Faculty members do not get access to the current research materials frequently, and they are never suggested to participate in the publication of scholarly articles or training in supervision. This brings such a professional atmosphere that research is put on the back burner, and supervision is a duty that is undermined and under-resourced. Although the current literature has been quite in-depth in explaining the struggles that students go through in the research process, a general gap in the literature is still present, which discusses the lived experiences of research supervisors. It is desirable to have more reflective and practice research studies that illuminate the emotional, intellectual, and logistical challenges of overseeing undergraduate research, especially in the Nepalese setting. The proposed study is going to fill that gap through the presentation of a critical self-reflection of the challenges encountered in the process of supervising undergraduate research projects in English education, and especially at community campuses. In this light, the study aims to add to the current discussions on enhancing the current research supervision and career development of creating a more supportive academic culture between the students and faculty.

Being employed in the role of a research guide for the last six years, I have faced the same obstacles consistently and in many instances annoying, especially when supervising the fourth-year undergraduate students of the English language. Most of such students have little

knowledge of what academic research involves; mostly they take it as a writing task and not an intellectual pursuit. Consequently, they often adopt the behaviors that include copying and pasting of online content without considering some of the key aspects of the activity, such as fieldwork and personal interaction with respondents. Selecting the right research topics and finding their own interests is also one of the usual challenges that results in vague, incoherent, or irrelevant research proposals. Moreover, the general ignorance of the research methodology, such as tool design, data collection and analysis, leads to poorly laid down drafts with poor referencing and little analytical value. The inconsistent nature of work, the lack of regular communication among students, and the unwillingness to participate in feedback sessions make the supervision process still more complex, as in most cases it ends with the last-minute submissions and requests for help. These are very serious challenges that jeopardize the quality of student research and the possibility of supervisor to offer any meaningful academic support. Nevertheless, even with these concerns, it is observable that there is a gap in reflective works exploring such supervisory problems as perceived by the guide. Thus, the current research is intended to analyze the most significant issues in supervision of fourth-year undergraduate research projects related to English education, as well as critically reflecting on my personal experience as a research guide so that to formulate the strategies that can improve the efficiency of undergraduate research supervision.

Literature Review

Undergraduate research supervision is also regarded as an important pedagogical practice in higher education across the world, especially in such fields as English education. International sources of literature describe the multifaceted roles that the supervisors are supposed to play. According to Brew and Mantai (2017), supervisors are both mentors and evaluators who provide emotional support and academic evaluation. The functional to relational typology of supervisory approach by Lee (2008) explains why supervisors need to use certain adaptive strategies depending on the needs of the students. Nevertheless, even in spite of its significance, the issue of undergraduate supervision is still unaddressed as a secondary duty instead of an inherent part of the academic work. According to Rowley and Slack (2021), mentoring inconsistency occurs because supervisors are not provided with formal support and training. The issues encountered in managing undergraduate research are multilateral and common both on the global and regional levels. Many studies emphasize the fact that students have little knowledge about the research process. A large number of learners interchange research with information collection and not critical inquiry. In the study, Todd, Smith, and Bannister (2006) discovered that such a

misconception results in superficial, mechanically hacked reports. On the same note, Walkington and Jenkins (2022) noted that students tend to misjudge the intellectual properties of research, such as treating them with a compliance orientation of mind. Such foundational problems as plagiarism, ineffective research design, and lack of analytical abilities persist. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) and then Elken and Wollscheid (2020) focus on the fact that students often cannot develop research questions, use a proper tool, and apply data analysis skills, which must be developed long before the students enter the final year.

Supervision is also very emotional and work is stressful. It not only deals with academic advice but with affective work, which is under-researched in educational institutions. The emotional aspects of the supervisory role were brought into the limelight as early as Grant (2003) pointed out the psychological weight that supervisors experience when students fail to deliver or check out of the process. Cotterall (2013) extends this by finding the emotional load of dealing with inconsistent student performance. According to Wisker and Robinson (2016), these types of emotional exhaustion may result in decreased motivation and burnout among faculty, especially in cases where supervision is performed without institutional recognition and pay.

As far as Nepal is concerned, the literature gives a picture of the lack of research infrastructure and disjointed academic practice, not least in the community campuses. Neupane (2020) claims that research projects are usually seen as a formality of graduation, and it is not given much importance in being novel or critical. These issues are compounded by institutional deficits, which include the lack of orientation programs, poor supervisory structures and the absence of measures of accountability. Poor exposure to academic writing and inquiry during previous semesters is a factor that is leading to the plight of students when they ultimately face the research requirement, which is in their final year, and this is the same case as what is reflected in personal reflections and experiences of the author. In order to solve these issues, the literature suggests systematic reforms and innovations in pedagogy. As suggested by Taylor and Beasley (2005), supervision can be incorporated into the organized academic schedules, and supervisor training should be included in the faculty development curricula. The authors suggest institutional research cultures that should be established by using mentorship programs, workshops, and feedback loops (Rowley and Slack, 2021). Neupane (2020) requests that undergraduate research supervision should be regulated and standardized on a national level because, without it, individual attempts are ineffective and, therefore, fragmented. The collective effect of these points of view is that the issue of the essentiality of coherent institutional strategies and reflective

supervisory practices is particularly significant in contexts where the difference between policy and practice is still significant, such as the case of Nepal.

Methods and Procedures

The research methodology used in this study entailed a qualitative and reflective research approach that is based on the auto-ethnography and narrative traditions. I was able to analyze my lived experiences critically as a researcher and as a participant because I was a supervisor of undergraduate research projects in the English education field at one of the community campuses in Nepal. The study is founded on 6 years' experience in supervision, most of the experience being held on fourth-year students at the Bachelor level. Several self-generated sources of data, such as reflective journals kept during the cycles of supervision, informal field notes of consultation with a student, email messages, feedback interactions, and anecdotal documentation of significant incidents, were used to draw data. These data were a good source to analyze frequent patterns and issues of the research supervision process. Data was analyzed using the thematic analysis approach. This was the familiarization of the stuff, coding, identifying themes, and synthesizing the findings in greater pedagogical and institutional backgrounds. The credibility of the research was achieved by means of triangulation of data sources, informal member checking, peer debriefing with colleagues, and long-term interaction over various academic years. Ethical issues were also taken into account and the institutional consent was obtained and the confidentiality of the students was ensured by using pseudonyms and exclusion of identifiable information. The study prioritizes honest and critical self-reflection to uncover the complexities of research supervision in under-resourced academic environments.

Result and Discussion

This chapter involves a critical analysis and interpretation of the reflective data obtained via my six years' experience as a research guide in terms of the journals, field notes, emails, and anecdotal accounts. The data was coded and categorized into 6 broad themes using thematic analysis, which represents the common challenges, insights, and institutional realities of supervising undergraduate English research projects. The analysis is not merely descriptive, but it is also critical and shows the underlying structural and pedagogical concerns that shape the research supervision process.

Academic Unpreparedness of Students

One of the most common and persistent problems of the supervision of undergraduate research in the field of English education is the intrinsic academic under preparedness of students. This problem is reflected in the fact that they have little knowledge of what academic research is all about. The main fallacy that many students commit when going into the research stage is that it is similar to an ordinary classroom essay or a general informative report. An example is the case when students suggest too general and un-researchable topics like the Importance of English, Global Warming, or The Impact of Social Media, without having any statement of particular research questions, target population, or research methodology. These subjects indicate that there is no critical engagement and framing of research, as they do not reduce the scope, create a gap in the current literature, or support their scholarly importance.

This lack of preparedness is especially noticeable when students are developing research questions. In one of these instances, one of the students trying to study Teaching Vocabulary in Secondary Schools merely asked the following question: Is vocabulary important? Which is too obvious and analytically shallow? Likewise, one more student who expressed his/her interest in grammar teaching wrote: How to teach grammar? without specifying the context, methods, and learners. These instances demonstrate that a large number of students have not been trained to develop particular, quantifiable, and researchable questions, but they have not been introduced to theoretical backbones that may inform their inquiry. Their work tends to be less deep than necessary to distinguish between a general interest and a research problem.

In addition, students tend to be confused about basic research terms. In another instance, a student who was doing research on the topic of Students' Attitudes toward English Reading Materials was confused about what was meant by the population, and proposed to survey only three of her friends. Other people could not differentiate data collection tools (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, observation checklists) and data sources (e.g., students, teachers, textbooks). Such confusion is a symptom of inadequate research literacy, which should have been fostered by previous experience in course work on research.

Discussions and written drafts are not always acquainted with the academic writing conventions. Literature reviews are often composed in the form of an article summary, and they include no synthesis, criticism, or thematic structure. As an illustration, students may summarize three unrelated articles in one paragraph and not even bother to connect the results and research

gaps. The lack of citation skills, the inability to paraphrase, and the inconsistent referencing also contribute to the problem. These deficiencies bring out the minimal or little training students get in academic discourse, although it is central to research.

The conceptual cause of this unpreparedness is more structural in nature. Research is often presented as a one-semester course in the final year of the undergraduate program in many institutions, especially in community campuses, which is too late in the undergraduate path. Students are not taught how to critically read, write academic papers, and reason methodologically, which makes the task of writing a research paper academically sound and, in a short period of time, daunting. The curriculum does not offer any scaffolding, including gradual introduction to mini-research projects or writing to analyze tasks, which would gradually develop the skills needed to conduct an independent inquiry.

Copy-Paste Culture and Plagiarism

The most concerning and recurring problem in the field of undergraduate research supervision is plagiarism and the acceptance of copy-pasting habits. Such an academic dishonesty culture is not only indicative of the inability of the students to be skillful in their research, but also of a larger institutional failure to inculcate the ethical value of academic honesty. In some of their supervision practices, students have presented complete parts, especially literature reviews and theoretical frameworks that were directly copied from the internet. A case in point was when a student copied an entire chapter in a post on a blog on Second Language Acquisition, including irrelevant hyperlinks, fonts of varying sizes, and formatting errors, which literally signifies that the information was not read and comprehended. The other trend here was the presentation of borrowed material by students of open-access sample theses or commercial academic assistance websites in most cases without any alteration or reference. In another case, a student has provided a theoretical framework on constructivism in language teaching, which was virtually copied and pasted (verbatim) in a Wikipedia article, with references that were not comprehended or applicable to the research situation. Upon querying the student on the sources, the student could not describe the authors or concepts referred to, which showed that the student had absolutely no idea of how the content was related to the student. This underscores the shallow reading of literature that typifies most such instances of plagiarism.

These examples indicate there is a greater misconception of what academic work is. They usually take the thesis as a formal necessity to pass instead of an opportunity to make a valuable

contribution to the academic discourse. This expedient mode of operation promotes short cuts and discourages intellectual integrity. The issue is especially urgent when it comes to English education, where students are supposed to be critically involved in the process of dealing with both areas of pedagogical theories and language teaching practices that require subtle interpretation and contextual applicability.

Supervisory-wise, plagiarism takes up an unreasonable share of time and energy. Rather than working on refining of research questions or on enhancing analysis, a substantial amount of the feedback process is a remedial activity of describing how to paraphrase, synthesize sources, and make citations. Supervisors are usually required to give elementary training on how to refer to systems like APA or MLA, even though they are the basic academic skills that were supposed to have been learnt earlier in the academic life of the students. An example is one of the students who inquired: Can't I simply write the name of the author and not the date? And here, the question is not only the sign of confusion, but it is also evidence of insufficient training in academic standards.

Institutional inaction is the sustenance of this culture of plagiarism. The majority of community campuses do not have formal orientation on research ethics and students are rarely instructed on how to critically approach sources and how to conduct literature review with the help of scholarly databases. Also, there is a lack of plagiarism-detecting software or policy enforcement. This has led to the fact that students are not being held responsible, and there is a vague boundary between right paraphrasing and unethical copying. Academic integrity can be viewed as the initial and only barrier by supervisors, which is not only unjust but also ineffective unless it is supported by the entire institution. Moreover, the lack of digital literacy training makes the problem more severe. A lot of students do not know how to find peer-reviewed journals, how to differentiate between credible and non-credible sources, and which referencing software to use, e.g., Zotero or Mendeley. They have to use blogs, open forums, and unreliable websites as a default strategy, just because they do not have the means to do the opposite.

Irregular Contact and Disengagement

The intermittent and demoralizing issue in the undergraduate research supervision process is the intermittent contact and disengagement of students. Such a problem severely restricts the establishment of purposeful academic mentoring and reduces the pedagogical worth of the research process. Some students vanish and reappear at long intervals, sometimes months

before submission due dates, with poorly prepared and conceptually flawed drafts. One reflective journal entry was made by a student who had not made any contact with the teacher in four months, with a half-written thesis on the Use of English Songs in Language Teaching, who was pleading for an immediate response to meet exam requirements. These instances are indicative of a utilitarian perception of research, in which the project is not seen as a work of scholarship but as a hurdle that has to be overcome by bureaucracy. This lack of engagement is often an indication of a wider misunderstanding of research as a rushed process and not a long-term mental activity that needs iteration, feedback, and gradual development. Indicatively, requests to get final approval were often made by students who had not been provided with comments on their proposals or first chapters, signifying that they thought that getting their supervisor's approval was a formality and not a part of an interactive academic process. One of them is where a student turned in a complete thesis draft without ever having spoken about the methodology, referencing, I thought I could do it on my own and present it to you at the end, which is not only disrespectful of supervision but also demonstrates a deep lack of understanding of the point of academic mentoring.

Such disengagement is caused by a complex set of factors. Social and economic demands, including working part-time or family commitments, tend to override the academic requirements, especially in a community campus where students are mostly of working or rural backgrounds. Moreover, there were complaints that other students were demotivated because their assigned topics were not of their interest; in most cases, the given topics were selected because of the lack of time or because of the convenience instead of their academic interest. In one case, a student confessed that he picked the topic in a hurry because he did not want to fall behind in time, and did not demonstrate much interest in learning more about it, which points to the lack of connection between topic choice and intellectual commitment.

The problem is also worsened by institutional practices. The majority of community campuses do not have any formal mechanisms that would implement regular interaction between students and supervisors. Progress tracking mechanisms, including logbooks, scheduled consultation, or milestone assessment, are rarely present. In the absence of these, the students are not subject to any academic punishment in case they vanish at some critical times in the research development. Such a lack of structure breeds a reactive supervisory culture, in which supervisors must give hurried feedback in a pressurized situation instead of leading students through the more

conceptual and methodological aspects of the research process. This leads to impairment of the pedagogical integrity of supervision.

Moreover, the absence of digital platforms or research management systems (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom, or institutional portals) implies that the communication process in formalized and not consistent. In one instance, a student uploaded a complete thesis draft through chat in a social media and requested feedback as fast as possible, which was not only very professional, but also bypassed the official academic steps. These practices are boundary crossing, ; they put time strains and eventually undermine academic responsibility on both ends. Importantly, it is also psychologically significant to the supervisors in terms of disengagement. The emotional work of dealing with unmotivated or last-minute students is a burden to manage. Supervisors are prone to frustrations and helplessness, particularly when their time and skills are underestimated. Most of the entries involved supervisors stating, among other things, that they feel like they care more about their work than they do, and this highlights the emotional weight of having to work in a lopsided academic relationship.

Lack of Methodological Understanding

The lack of knowledge of the students on research methodology, which is arguably the foundation of any academic inquiry, is a topic that has proved to be persistent and alarming throughout the supervision process. This gap not only undermines the quality of academic writing of undergraduate theses but also exposes the gaps in the design of curricula and the readiness of an institution. The approach of many students to methodology is that is an obligatory part to be completed and not the plan that will guide the whole research process. Their questions and actions demonstrated the basic misconceptions of the basic methodological rules. As an example, one student wrote, "Sir, may I ask five questions and ask my friends? This is an example of a shallow and transactional method of data collection, as it shows a lack of knowledge regarding the sampling methods, ethics, validity, and reliability.

Students tended to recommend tools and techniques without explaining or even knowing whether they were appropriate or not. In one conspicuous instance, a student who was researching on the topic of Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of L1 in English Classrooms incorporated a questionnaire with ambiguous questions that had leading questions and no demographic variables, which did not take into consideration the contextual aspects of the research. When asked about the reason why the tool was copied, the student responded, I found a sample online and copied it,

which not only shows no critical thinking but also shows the unregulated use of template-driven research, without modification and validation. This dependence on decontextualized, generic tools is a contributor to superficial data and invalid results.

These problems were not a case isolated situation but were rife in the cohort. A lot of students were unable to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative paradigms. As an example, students who were planning to research the classroom interaction tended to use questionnaires without knowing that observation instruments or discourse analysis would be more suitable. Other people abused mixed methods without knowing how to combine qualitative and quantitative data in a meaningful way. In one of the theses, a student stated that he or she used mixed methods, but he or she only carried out a short survey and included an interview with one of the students as an aside, and did not perform any triangulation or analytical synthesis. These inaccurate understandings imply that students tend to adhere to methodological names without understanding their epistemological and procedural consequences.

To a great extent, these issues are caused by the curricular oversights of research training. Most Nepalese undergraduate courses in English do not introduce research until the last year, and may not have courses in research design, data analysis, or academic writing in the previous semesters. Students are not well prepared to make independent inquiries because the scaffold instruction, like literature review assignments, simulated research proposals or practical training in interview techniques, is not provided. As a result, regular supervision gatherings degenerated into remedial workshops. The supervisors were forced to answer the question of what the difference between open-ended and closed questions is, why pilot testing is necessary, or what the role of coding is in a qualitative research subject that is much more appropriate in a formal methodology course.

Supervisors are the ones who must shoulder the responsibility of filling in the gaps in knowledge, and at the same time, check and approve drafts, as this lack of proper methodological literacy spreads into their schools. This is a two-sided situation of an instructor and an evaluator that generates tensions. The supervisors are usually torn between the academic standards and the low competencies of their students. The frustration of having to work in several pedagogical roles without institutional support was summed up by one supervisor who commented that I have to explain to them what a variable is, before I can even discuss hypothesis testing.

The cultural and structural gaps in the academic institutions, especially in the community campuses, are a major impediment in the proper implementation of undergraduate research. Although the weaknesses at the student level are often given much attention, such as in terms of poor academic preparation or plagiarism, they are sometimes symptoms of institutional failure on a deeper level. The lack of a well-defined and structured research culture is one of the most significant gaps that have been witnessed. The deficiencies are highly conspicuous at the community campus at which I work. They give out undergraduate students' research projects without any orientation on what academic research is all about. There were no briefing and training activities at the campus level conducted in various academic years to make students aware of fundamental elements of research like selection of topics, writing of proposals, research ethics, and time management. In my field notes, I have always captured students going up to supervisors without having the slightest idea of the structure of research.

Faculties are also not motivated to deal with the process in depth due to the absence of institutional recognition and encouragement of supervision. Supervisory roles are not included in the calculation of faculty workload and professional development plans and are viewed as adjunct to teaching roles. Research mentorship is an additional burden without time allowances. This creates a situation of rushed oversight or perfunctory feedback, and the whole process becomes a bureaucratic necessity instead of an academic activity. Cases in institutions that have high research cultures are a stark contrast. An example is that in many universities in the Global North, research training is incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum as sequenced courses on academic writing, methodology, and data analysis. They also have access to online libraries, research management tools, and regular seminars on issues including research ethics to proposal writing. Such institutions build a culture of research as not something that is done once, but something that is practiced as an intellectual activity. Research in the Nepalese community campus, however, is still a checkbox at the culmination of the degree enterprise, and is not in any way part of the pedagogical and institutional fabric.

Structural reforms are thus necessary to fill this gap. Research needs to be institutionalized by institutions by integrating the research curriculum, providing training, and assigning administrative responsibility. This may involve setting up Research Methodology courses during previous semesters, initiating mentorship programs, holding orientation workshops on an annual basis, and creating of research support centers. There should also be

standardization and implementation of policies regarding student-supervisor ratio, tracking of progress, and review processes of ethical issues.

Institutional Gaps and Lack of Research Culture

The research weaknesses in the aspects of structure and culture in the academic institutions, especially in the community campuses, is a major deterrence to the successful implementation of undergraduate research. Although much focus is usually made on student-level weaknesses, such as lack of academic preparation or plagiarism, they are frequently the manifestations of institutional failures. Among the most severe gaps that have been identified are the lacks of an established research culture, which is well-defined and supported. The deficits are very evident at the community campus where I am working. Undergraduate learners are regularly given research projects without being oriented on what it takes to be an academic researcher. There was no campus-level briefing or training to orient the students on key aspects of the research, like topic selection, proposal writing, research ethics, and time management, in several academic years. In my field notes, I always have students who come to supervisors without having the slightest idea about the fundamental structures of research.

Supervision is also not deeply involved by the faculty because there is no institutional recognition and incentive to do so. Supervisory roles are typically viewed as a peripheral part of teaching roles and are not included in the workload estimates or professional growth initiatives of the faculty. Research mentorship is an additional burden without time allowances. This creates poor quality supervision or careless feedback and makes the whole process a bureaucratic obligation instead of an academic pursuit. An example of the institutions with a rich culture of research presents the opposite. As an example, research training is incorporated into most undergraduate courses in universities of the Global North, such as sequenced courses in academic writing, methodology, and data analysis. They also access digital libraries, research management services and regular workshops on various subjects, including research ethics and proposal development. These institutions instill the culture of research not being a single occasion but an ongoing intellectual exercise. In Nepalese community campuses, though, research is nonetheless being seen as a check box at the culmination of the degree journey, and not part of the pedagogical and institutional fabric.

In order to narrow this gap, structural reforms are required. The research should be institutionalized in institutions by incorporating it in the curriculum, providing intensive training,

and maintaining administrative accountability. This may involve the initiation of Research Methodology courses within previous semesters, the initiation of mentorship programs, the initiation of orientation workshops every academic year and the formation of research support centers. Also, student-supervisor ratio policies, progress tracking policies, and policies on ethical review procedures must be uniformed and implemented.

Synthesis and Critical Reflection

The thematic examination of undergraduate research supervision in the Nepalese community campuses depicts an extremely locked system of problems that are both personal as well as structural. These obstacles of academic inadequacy and a plagiarism culture, disengagement, confusion of methods, emotional burnout in supervisors and an insurmountable institutional support create a networked web that frustrates the education and integrity of undergraduate research.

Although the tendency to blame the vices on student behavior might be very easy, it will be simplistic and ultimately unproductive. The regularity of the problems found with several groups of cohorts of students, whereby they present plagiarized work, vanish months later, poses elementary questions concerning sampling, or considers methodology a speed bump to an important juncture in their academic development. Yet, these tendencies of the students are the signs of a more serious illness the lack of a strong research ecosystem in the community campuses. The design and sequence of the curriculum fail as the students do not get any experience in academic writing or critical reading since they are introduced to research training only during the last semester. A curriculum that sees research as a one-time event but not a process preconditions confusion and surface interaction among students. Also, the emotional and professional labour supervisors are forced to bear, introduces another under-debated aspect of higher education in Nepal, the work of faculty that is both invisible and undervalued. Supervisors will also be required to control the intellectual and emotional instability of research, as well as logistical and ethical errors of unprepared students. They usually do so without institutional training, without compensating workloads, and without having institutional support systems like peer mentoring groups or research offices. This generates a model of supervision that is not very much designed but based on good will. According to journal reflections, the role of supervisors is often to serve as a replacement instructor, mental health counselor, and administrative guide, and these are roles that go way beyond their official job description.

Conversely, global research-based institutions provide educational examples. In one example, as a first-year student, I had to undertake scaffold academic writing, critical theory, and research methods modules at the University of Melbourne or the SOAS University of London, which also introduced me to research activities at an early stage. These are backed by writing centers, ethics boards, digital repositories and frequent workshops which all aimed at normalizing and demystifying the research process. These are not useful in that they can be wholesale transplanted into the Nepalese environment, but they demonstrate what can be done when research becomes an administrative burden, instead of a pedagogical priority. Consequently, to tackle the issues that have been identified in this reflective analysis, one will need to implement specific measures to fix the situation on the student level, as well as conduct a complete institutional re-evaluation of undergraduate research. To begin with, the teaching of research should be incorporated across the undergraduate programme with well-defined milestones in each of the year to develop the core competencies. Second, institutionalization of mandatory supervisor training is necessary to make sure that faculty members are armed with the pedagogical and emotional instruments required to be successful supervisors. Third, uniform policies on timelines of supervision, feedback cycles, and evaluation standards should be formulated and implemented, with accountability being held on both sides of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Finally, the institutions need to promote a campus-wide culture of research by events such as student research conferences, undergraduate publication offices, and faculty and student interest opportunities.

Conclusion

This reflective paper has revealed that the process of overseeing undergraduate research in English is full of various challenges, both at the level of the particular students and at the level of the whole institution. The guidance of research is not an individual task, but a systemic one that entails collaboration, training, and systematic academic support. As a personal experience of having worked as a research guide in the last six years, I have found that there is a dire need to revamp the introduction, teaching, and supervision of research in the undergraduate levels. This study highlights the depth and complexity of the issues that define the nature of undergraduate research supervision in the Nepalese community campuses that indicating that lack of readiness among students in the form of academic under-preparedness, plagiarism, disengagement, and lack of methodological savvy are directly intertwined with institutional deficiencies on a larger scale. The lack of a structured curriculum to support the development of research skills, the lack of

formal training of supervisors, and poor institutional support, puts students and supervisors in a situation where they cannot perform their academic functions well. In addition, the heavy emotional and professional work required of the supervisors is not well-appreciated and is not aided either, which further undermines the quality of supervision. The solutions to these problems involve institutional changes that include research training across the undergraduate experience, have explicit supervisory policies, and a strong research culture that places importance on academic honesty and skepticism. It is within the framework of these systemic and pedagogical changes that the issue of undergraduate research supervision can be lifted out of its present constraints on procedures and become truly a rich and empowering scholarly undertaking.

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Exploring Internal Assessment System Management: Voices from Master's Level Students of Tribhuvan University

Samjhana Basnyat[1] & Surya Prasad Adhikari (PhD)[2*]

1. Assistant Professor, Sanothimi Campus
2. Assistant Professor, Central Department of Education, Kirtipur
 *Corossponding Author: Surya Prasad Adhikari (PhD)

Abstract

Assessment is an essential element of university education as it shapes students' learning outcomes and processes. One powerful strategy for incrementally improving student performance involves continuous assessment. Internal assessment management make sure nondiscriminatory evaluation, promotes continuous learning, enhances competence, and influences students' academic performance for overall educational outcomes. This study aimed to examine students' observations on internal assessment in relation to their academic performance and motivation. The study applied a qualitative research design. We collected informations from the students and transcribed into Devanagari script, than translated it into English, coded the quotation, and developed the themes inductively. Findings of this study included some uncomfortable circumstances regarding academic writing, presentation skills, assessment preparation, and regular attendance. In spite of this, students are excited to utilise new information and are curious about what they are learning as they strive to complete the internal assessment tasks. Therefore, for internal assessment to be implemented and used effectively, the course structure and student characteristics should be taken into consider. Communicating with students about the goals and advantages of continuous assessment may be the key to minimise the possible adverse consequences of continuous, graded assessments, in addition to increasing their participation in regular, non-graded testing. The semester system has been demonstrated to work; students have to study within it, and it has been improved so much that it is completely unrecognisable. Students who want to learn more about the

system must apply from an earlier stage. In the end, regular classroom activities and communication chain interconnections help students become better at using this system.

Keywords: *Assessment system, students' perception, semester system, learning achievement, fairness in evaluation*

Introduction

A systematic approach to assessing, quantifying, and recording an individual's or group's knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and beliefs is called an assessment system. To assess performance or comprehension, it frequently uses a range of techniques and methodologies, including assessments, projects, and observations. For students' academic achievement to be evaluated fairly, openly, and consistently, internal assessment management is essential (Oli,2024). It places a strong emphasis on alignment with learning objectives, methodical record-keeping, and formative feedback. Learning outcomes are improved and responsibility has been promoted by effective management (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Effective systems for assessment can help teachers and students find their areas of strength and growth by giving them insightful feedback. Assessment has a significant impact on students' learning outcomes and processes, making it one of the most crucial elements of a university education (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004). Furthermore, Assessments are a key component of almost every educational institution's process for granting students the certificates of completion they need. It is therefore essential for educational institutions (Meyer et al., 2010). Continuous assessment, whether internal or summative, enhances students' academic performance and psychological health while giving insight into their learning preparedness (Isaksson, 2008). Assessment inspires students to engage in reading by nurturing a spirit of enthusiasm and confidence about the learning outcome (Aftab and Tariq, 2018). It reduces examination anxiety and fosters students' ability to become self-reflective learners (Shields, 2015). Furthermore, a student's perception, feedback, and academic performance may be influenced by an excessive amount of assessments (McDowell and Sambell, 1999).

Internal assessments for the Master of Education (M.Ed.) semester system are essential for assessing students' progress at Tribhuvan University (TU) in Nepal. These evaluations, which account for 40% of the final grade, usually consist of class assessments, assignments, presentations, and discussion participation. Throughout the semester, they are intended to promote active participation and provide ongoing feedback (Luitel,2023). Internal assessments

increasingly contribute to a substantial amount of master's level grades, frequently up to 50%, including quizzes, assignments, and term papers; however, certain institutions do not have standardised rubrics or remedial assessments (Khanal & Timilsena,2025). Final exams and internal assessments are combined to provide a comprehensive assessment of both academic knowledge and practical abilities. 80% attendance is required in this semester's system in order to take the final test. Each student needs to successfully complete all of the exams administered by the office of the examination controller at at the end of each academic session in order to get certification for the M.Ed. degree.

Assessments carried out within an organisation or institution where the rating and evaluation procedures are administered internally are known as internal evaluations. Internal evaluations' main goal is to determine a candidate's level of competence and dependability in a certain field or subject. Internal evaluations make it easier to instantly assess students' progress in a semester-based educational system. By offering important performance indicators, highlighting particular learning difficulties for focused remediation, and directing the ongoing development of assessment techniques, they enhance student learning (Tropman, 2014). The intention of a program's self-assessment is to assist students in developing their own understanding. Students are required to assess both the learning process and the final outcome. Peer assessment is a type of collaborative learning where students are able to evaluate each other's work in addition to their own. While the teacher is typically in charge of evaluating the final outcome, implementing student evaluation in the classroom supports students in analysing both their own work and the process that ultimately brought them to it. The communication loop between teachers and students as well as the teaching-learning process becomes more effective and efficient when this method is integrated into everyday classroom activities (Shield, 2015).

Effective formative evaluation has a significant positive influence on students' motivation and achievement. Additionally, it helps them be able to function independently. In an effective institution, formative assessment will be integrated into everyday classroom activities. In these situations, students are fully aware of the subject matter they are learning and the standards they are striving for (Bram et al., 2017). There is plenty of discussion among the students and the teacher on how the students' work fulfils the assessment criteria. Feedback that is clear and concise helps students understand and evaluate their previous attempts to meet the standards as well as their next moves. Students are inspired to become reflective, curious learners

who feel comfortable assessing their own and others' development since they are aware that they will be helped to fulfil the standards (Meyer et al., 2010).

It is essential to select assessment tasks that accurately understand students' current needs, limitations, and skills in addition to providing ongoing feedback on classroom activities. The range of pertinent activities and assignments that teachers must collect evaluation data from will depend on the subjects being studied and the level of the program (Alquraan, 2014). Class assessments, student written assignments submitted in class or at home, student responses to organised questions, oral responses, project work, portfolios, presentations, creative work, and exhibitions are most likely some of them. Creating and executing a whole-school assessment policy could help guarantee that learning assessment methods impact the standard of instruction and learning throughout the school and are understood by educators, students, and parents (Gyawali,2021). The first essential step is to create a common understanding of the many forms of assessments and how to use them to enhance classroom instruction. Furthermore, it might be necessary and beneficial to conduct additional research and train the entire school on how to use assessments to improve learning. An assessment policy should serve as the foundation for the educational institution's assessment approach. It will describe the structure that will make it possible to monitor, compile, record, and report on pupils' progress. Additionally, it needs to be in line with the educational institution's policies and procedures for reporting and marking as well as teaching and learning. Any assessment system's influence on students' learning processes and outcomes is demarcated by their opinions of the assessment system (Lizzio and Wilson, 2013). Relationships with teachers and peers, personal characteristics, and earlier assessment experiences all influence the opinions of learners. Students may therefore interpret any given assessment-related activity in different ways, which could have a range of effects on how they learn.

Inequalities in the techniques employed to assess perceptions may be the cause of students' different perspectives on continuous evaluation. Perceptions can be assessed at various levels by various research methodologies. Some studies concentrate on how students perceive specific assessment techniques (Flores et al., 2015). In contrast, others emphasis on the superiority of students in the way of assessment in general (Brown and Wang, 2013), or student understandings of the teachers' style and behavior of assessment in actual (Alquraan, 2014). On the other hand, perception can also be studied from a variety of perspectives. For instance, certain research assess students' perceptions of the fair-mindedness of the assessment's length, content,

and outcomes (Flores et al., 2015), while others examine how cheerful students are with the assessment tasks determine efficiency of assessment system.

This study paper will assess the perception of master's degree students about an internal assessment system adopted by faculty of education,TU. This means the degree of measured perceptions relates to students' understanding and experience regarding internal assessment management. As far as we remain familiar with, a few previous research has been done in this area. As a result, a new internal assessment system which will be categorized and considered in the students' regular and final course grades is essential for study. After considering the making it in line with the University's general academic and examination rules, we are interested in this study area.

The purpose of this study is to examine how master's level students perceive internal assessment management, with a concentrate on its efficiency, fairness, and influence on their achievement, skill development, and overall academic success.

Methods and Procedures

This study adopted a qualitative research design and narrative approach, which captures lived experiences through an assortment of personal stories (Creswell, 2014). Seven students were purposively selected as participants for this study. They were studied in M Ed third semester at Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur, and represented from diverse backgrounds and area of specialization. Seven students participated in the study, with one selected from each specialization subject area. They were selected through a purposive sampling technique based on their class presentation and the major subject area they studied. During each interview, students were questioned about their opinions on the use of continuous assessment system management in the instructional program. They also shared their experiences, both positive and negative, in relation with the assessment process. Additionally, students were asked about their views on assigning grades for internal assessments in each subject. They discussed how these grades influenced their motivation and behavior. While we conducted the in-depth interviews, another researcher simultaneously collected information by recording students' responses over the phone.

As a result, we chose them for this study in order to focus on their experiences with the assessment system. When participants want to share their tales and we want to report on them, we have to use narrative research (Creswell, 2012). We had taken in-depth interviews with participants to collect their experiences, voice of sentiment .We had recorded interviews through

mobile set and transcribed carefully. Both researchers tried to control bias during transcription and maintained a natural setting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A qualitative interview takes place when a researcher asks one or more participants a broad, open-ended question, records their response, transcribes the interview, and types the information into computer files for analysis. (Creswell, 2012). In order to capture the meaning of the text data, we employed a general inductive strategy to reduce extensive and variable raw text data employing coded and subsequently developed categories (Thomas, 2006). Global themes and basic themes were used to arrange and code the transcribed data. The researcher who prepared the theme network attempted to connect different speculations to the data and make an argument about relevant topics. Significant ideas that were clear in the data were extracted from the transcripts using a technique called thematic analysis. In assessing each participant's level of understanding, these issues have been considered to be relevant.

Results and Discussion

M Ed level students at Sanothimi Campus struggle with time management for both earning and learning. They face many learning challenges, such as difficulty using computers, learning English as a second language, and allocating time for homework assignments. A normal inductive thematic exploration was used to assess the information (Patton, 2015). Every Google Drive interview file was individually coded by us. Code translations and multiple perspectives regarding codes with contradictory meanings are discussed after each file has been coded separately. We have prepared global themes and gathered themes that have been transcribed and coded based on fundamental themes. In order to prepare thematic networks, researchers have attempted to connect various theories to the data and have relevant discussions about issues. Researchers' understanding of students' perceptions of internal assessment effectiveness and fairness was enhanced in both quality and depth by the entire data analysis process, which encouraged in-depth engagement, prolonged reflections, and a variety of perspectives.

Student's perception on the effectiveness of the internal assessment system

Since the study's respondents were students with various educational backgrounds, their responsare also diverse. Included below are student responses about the effectiveness of the internal assessment system. One student from a mathematics background talked with me that;

I feel the internal assessments help me stay on track with the syllabus and reinforce what we learn in class. The assessments push me to study consistently, but sometimes it feels more like busywork rather than actual learning. I don't think they effectively measure my understanding. They often test memory rather than critical thinking.

Students' perceptions of the assessment system's influence on their learning and proficiency development are reflected in these responses, which range from favorable to unfavorable. Another respondent from a language background stated;

Internal assessments give me regular feedback on my progress, which is helpful in identifying my weak areas early. The system has improved my study habits, but I wish it focused more on practical applications of knowledge. It helps me stay engaged with the course, but the stress of frequent assessments sometimes affects my overall performance.

Another health education student stated, *"I value the internal assessment framework since it provides me with a sense of progress throughout the semester"*. He further explained, "How can I make an assessment on time if I'm not familiar with the computer and e-learning subject, and there are no appropriate source books in our library?*"*. In another context he added "*When I submit my assignments, I worry that others will quickly figure out my weaknesses since I am always afraid of the assessment presentation and the number of presentations necessary for grading*".

A student from a social science background stated;

I used to read the course material whenever I had free time, even while riding the bus to and from class. However, the implementation of the continuous assessment technique in this course caused me to increase the amount of time I spent studying. Before this course, I would read and study any course materials just a day or two before the final test, but because of the continuous assessment in this course, I understood that I needed to study the topics frequently because there was an evaluation every other week. I was able to feel more relaxed on the day of the final exam thanks to this".

At the same time, we noticed that the students are afraid of the assignment. We quickly identify students who are experiencing anxiety-related symptoms. They also need of counseling, interventions should include an assessment. Regarding this, one student said;

When the teacher says, "Your assessment is coming up," I get really anxious and scared about it. How can I turn in my assignment on time? That's my fear. Another student says, I want to complete my assignments at home because I can't present my paper in front of all of my friends because I'm nervous and I won't do well.

Students experience anxiety when they fail to recognize the link between their studies and grades. This is because their internal locus of control makes them feel powerless during an assessment. Fearing that they won't be able to freely communicate with their teacher about the expectations, fearing that they won't achieve and so haven't studied enough, students have assessed themselves and feel bad about not fulfilling obligations to friends and family, further elucidating a person's personal life. Their personality and behavioral features are largely shaped by their sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Finally that influences their intrinsic motivating habits to learn.

Students frequently concentrate more on their standing and grade than on how they might do better. Every student has potential for improvement, regardless of where they are in the class order. While the top-placed student may believe they are performing very well, it's possible that they are particularly capable and may perform far better. Students that are categorized lower in the class usually feel not as much of motivated. Black and Wiliam (2018) have confidence in that when learners are given achieved marks, their self-esteem responds emotionally to the given score. A lower-than-expected grade is interpreted as a failure, whereas a higher-than-expected grade makes pupils happy and eager to know if they outscored others in their class. Emphasising on the learner's continuous improvement standards rather than overall scores is a successful approach that helps minimise ego.

Students have come to understand that many of them come to college believing completely that they will not do well on assessments or in presentations in class assignments for college Students may believe they are just not college material if they perform poorly in a variety of subjects, or they may believe this belief is restricted to a single course or subject. As psychologist Bandura (1994) fighting self-doubt makes it hard to do much. Actual student achievement is reflected in self-assessment score guides. student aspects include time management techniques, study habits, self-awareness of one's ability to achieve, perseverance, tenacity, administrative skills, and collaborative attitude (Shield, 2015). This finding was consistent with research by Lemanski (2011), which suggested that students choose periodic assessments as a means of encouraging them to study on a regular schedule. According to another

study, pupils feel comfortable in the motivating setting which results from internal assessment for regular study (Bram et al., 2017).

Fairness and Transparency of the Internal Assessment Process

The internal assessment procedure must be fair and transparent to guarantee that every student is assessed impartially and fairly. Fairness guarantees that all students are assessed equally, without favoritism or bias, and transparency ensures that criteria, expectations, and assessment techniques are made apparent to students beforehand. Students and teachers develop trust as a result, which inspires pupils to participate completely. Internal assessments are a trustworthy indicator of students' abilities and development when they are conducted fairly and transparently. One student stated;

> *After receiving my assessment, I became even more curious and hurried to read, write, seek, and consult with friends while doing my best to complete the report. I found the readings and assignments more difficult in the past two semesters, but they have helped me learn more deeply this semester. For us, impartiality and openness in internal evaluations are crucial. We feel like we are all in agreement when the standards and grading criteria are made clear. We no longer have to worry about favoritism because we are certain that our performance is the only thing being considered.*

On the basis of the research, when students are enthusiastically involved in the internal assessment, they have long-lasting knowledge and acquire a good score.

> *We currently have the second semester exam coming up, and we feel at ease around exam time, mostly because of the assignment. Exam preparation is no longer a concern for me, but regular attendance, assignments, and class presentations are more beneficial to me, thus I can say that assignments contribute to a high passing rate and high quality of education. If assessments cannot be assessed or are given fewer marks, I have little interest in taking them. I always put in a lot of effort when it comes to tests.*

The findings complement to the existing body of literature by highlighting the ways in which students' personal beliefs and experiences interact with the social environments of society, schools, and classrooms to influence how they perceive and express fairness in classroom assessments. Regarding this a student reported;

Our teacher ensures fair treatment by giving everyone the same opportunities to participate and be assessed. She provides clear rubrics before assignments and gives constructive feedback to all students equally. If anyone has questions or concerns, she addresses them openly, making sure no one feels left out or overlooked.

These findings support the foundations established by socio-cultural theories of assessment and social psychology theories of fairness to construct a theory of fairness that incorporates the social, cultural, and economic context in which evaluations have been carried out (Brookhart, 2018; Elwood & Murphy, 2015). Students who scored higher on the internal assessment demonstrated excitement about the effectiveness of the system. This can be explained by the fact that if students assumed that the assessment had greater importance, they would be more likely to work harder in their studies in order to achieve better outcomes. Exam grades, which are closely related to feelings and emotions, are another theory that suggests they could influence the views of students. A student appreciates the assessment when they receive a high score, and vice versa (Carless 2006).

Student motivation, performance, and learning outcomes

Increasing student motivation may cause improvements in the way that students perform on assessments and in their grades. After every student performance, the target score may be revised in order to motivate students to keep improving their adjustment. We have asked all seven sampled students about their motivation, class regularity, overall performance and attraction towards master's in education program. Their voices are as follow;

It will make a difference in the final term if we attend every Class; we will get 5 points in the exam. In my first semester due to assignment of work I have obtain good marks in the return examination ,we have given chance for correction and upgrade in grading so its helps for grading system.

It leads to upgrading for student numbers, when students attend regularly, they have an index knowledge, so the majority of students are present every day. In this regard a student said;

The semester system is fruitful, as it has been revised better than the previous annual system. Regular assessment, research work and lots of practical activities have made compulsory for the student. Classes run regularly in the morning so we can join in work

in the day. Study and work make me practical in life so I can enjoy in both earning and learning equally.

According to university regulation 80% attendance is compulsory to be eligible for both internal and external evaluation criteria. It seems that students' regular study habits are primarily influenced by their result on each subject-related assessment rather than the assignment itself. The voice of one student in learning performance was;

The assessment system helps us track our progress and identify areas where we need improvement. It pushes us to stay focused throughout the semester, not just during exams. The feedback from assignments and tests shows us where we stand, helping us improve and ultimately achieve better results.

Instead of boosting the motivation that can improve students' long-term learning and retention of the knowledge they receive from the course, this contributes to increased student motivation and quick learning in order to obtain marks for the specific assessment. One student confidently stated;

Internal assessments have improved my overall learning by keeping me engaged throughout the course. Regular tests, assignments, and presentations make me study consistently instead of cramming at the end. The feedback I receive helps me understand my mistakes improve. It's not just about grades—it's about applying what I've learned and growing academically.

In response to research, internal assessments need to be organised in a way which influences how students actively modify their performance. It demonstrates that in order to shape how students proactively extend their effort for long-term learning, internal assessment should be structured (De Paola and Scoppa, 2011). Examining the Increasing learning outcomes requires strategic interventions and reforms at all educational levels. There are substantial barriers to receiving a substantial service supply through improved regulations and stronger associations, require adjustment.

This result was comparable to that of Tropman (2014), who exposed that internal assessment negotiations the benefits of increasing student self-confidence, reducing anxiety, and simplifying bottomless tolerances through creating a more active learning environment. The research presented here highlights the value of assessment in increasing students' self-efficacy

and learning competencies, both of which improve student performance in learning environments. Using internal assessments, students were able to determine their strengths and areas for improvement in order to improve their overall performance on the next assessment.This finding provides an easy explanation of the formative assessment aspect of this study, where students use the findings of their assessments in order to guide their learning. The results of this study are very similar to those of Black and William (1998), who identified that the most significant and successful component of assessment is learning from assessments.

Conclusion

In Nepal, internal assessment management is essential throughout all levels of education, however it's particularly significant at institutions of higher learning like Tribhuvan University. The recent study highlighted the need of considering the views of learners on assessments when undertaking research on assessment. The views of students regarding assessments could provide important information about how assessments influence learners. Nevertheless, the study additionally demonstrated that, despite internal assessment's beneficial influence on students' achievement in assessments and overall grades, it additionally enhanced students' extrinsic motivation rather than their intrinsic motivation. For better internal assessment administration and application, the course structure and student characteristics should be considered. Assessing learners in the classroom encourages students to critically assess both their individual work and the processes they followed to get what they have achieved. As students' perceptions of assessment's effectiveness and positive effects increased, correspondingly increased their perceptions of its adverse consequences. Thus, teachers could potentially able to clarify to students that assessments aim to be beneficial instruments for learning and that grades are a reflection of their present work rather than their individual potential. We briefly address the matter of standardising assessments since we want to make assured that everyone in the teaching profession is using the same assessment criteria. When it comes to evaluating students, feasibility as well as efficacy of the assessment type may be significantly affected by issues with technology-related resources like electricity, the internet, and smart phones. Therefore, if these aspects are neglected, students may become frustrated with assessments, which could make it difficult to utilise the system in the future.

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Parental Attitudes toward Schooling in Low-Income Households: A Qualitative Study from Dhading, Nepal

Shreesha Bista
M.Phil Scholar
Kathmandu University

Abstract

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) mentions that every person has the right to education. It states that all elementary education shall be compulsory for the overall development of human personality and to strengthen human rights, and has given parents the right to choose the kind of education for children. Yet, rural and low-income communities in Nepal still face significant barriers to education, and those barriers often mar parents' decisions to provide education to their children. This qualitative study examines the attitude of parents towards education in low-income households of Bhumesthan VDC of Dhading district. I have taken a narrative inquiry approach within an interpretivist framework to explore how parents frame their decisions on providing education to their children in relation to economic constraints, traditional gender norms, and systemic challenges. Findings of this study reveal that there is a complex interplay between aspiration towards education and actual constraints faced- On the one hand, parents value education as a potential route to better livelihood, on the other hand, immediate demands towards economic contributions including support to subsistence agriculture, cultural expectations regarding gender norms, and geographical barriers such as long distance travel temper their decision to provide quality education to their children. I have identified "aspirations vs. pragmatism" as a key theme in this study, which refers to the balance that parents create between their hope for their children's futures and the realities of daily survival.

Based on the findings of this study, I recommend context-specific interventions to provide access to education, rather than relying on generic, country-wide policy. One way to do that could be by aligning school calendars with agricultural cycles (which is done in many districts), expanding flexible learning opportunities through infrastructural support to children, and strengthening school–community partnerships. This study centers on the voices of parents from low-income households and offers a human-centered approach towards discussion related to providing access to education.

Keywords: *Educational access, Aspirations for Future, Pragmatic Reality, Barriers to Education*

Introduction

Nepal's educational landscape is shaped by various historical, political, and socio-economic transitions. This has greatly influenced access to schools and the quality of education children receive (Carney & Madsen, 2009). The Government of Nepal has been taking measures to improve access to school with initiatives like Education for All [EFA], School Sector Development Plan [SSDP, 2016–2023], School Education Sector Plan [SESP, 2022-2032], etc. The Constitution of Nepal's (2015) Article 31 guarantees the right to free and compulsory basic education and free secondary education to all its citizens and the state is obligated to ensure access to education to all children, especially those from the marginalized communities (Government of Nepal, 2015). Similarly, section 3 of the Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2075 mandates that every child between the ages of 5 and 12 years has the right to free and compulsory basic education and it emphasizes that no child should be deprived of education on any grounds (MOEST, 2018). As a result, substantial progress has been made in expanding access to primary education. Yet, this progress has been uneven with respect to rural and urban areas, and there are significant disparities along geographic, economic, and social lines (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education [MoE], 2016). In some rural areas, higher net enrollment rates do not mean consistent attendance or improved learning outcomes (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2019).

Many factors influence students' access to education in rural areas, including economic constraints, gender expectations, family values, geographical restrictions, etc. These challenges are further compounded by the seasonal natural disasters that disrupt regular school operation and impact family livelihoods, leading to students dropping out (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018). While urban schools largely boast of improved infrastructure, access to reliable vehicles to get to school, availability of teachers and regular classes, and proper resource

allocation, schools in rural areas still struggle with a range of constraints that limit equitable access to education (World Bank, 2020).

Dhading is an example of one such rural area. Located in central Nepal, a large part of Dhading has difficult terrain with dispersed settlements making access to school a major challenge (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2021). Children must walk long distances along unsteady roads, sometimes facing seasonal calamities such as landslides or floods just to get to school. There are many low income households where parents prefer to send their children to work instead of going to school. Some need the money, while others are bound by the intersection of environmental, geographical, economic, and logistical constraints.

I first visited Bhumesthan VDC of Dhading district in 2015 for a week to conduct classroom evaluation for a project run by an NGO. During the visit, I stayed with a family that hosted my residence, and our dinner conversations inevitably led to their children's education. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the parents, who belonged to a low-income household, mentioned that a large portion of their monthly income is being invested towards the education of their three children, who were studying in a nearby private school. They hoped that their kids would someday go to the capital, or perhaps even some first-world nation, and earn well enough to provide them an easy, early retirement. A very typical parental attitude, I thought. Then I had the chance to engage in a similar conversation with their neighbor, and I found that their kids are not attending the public school they have been enrolled in, and although the parents hope for a bright future for their children, their economic limitations require their children to earn instead of studying. This piqued my interest in how parental attitudes drastically impact children's education and learning outcomes, and became the foundation for this study.

This study, which resulted from an extensive in-depth interview I conducted in 2024, focuses on the lived experiences and perspectives of parents in Bhumesthan, Dhading and it examines how they perceive the value of education, navigate structural barriers, and make decisions about enrolling their children to school and supporting their education at home. By using an interpretivist narrative approach, my main goal was to capture the depth and complexity of parental attitudes, moving beyond statistical measures to explore the cultural, emotional, and contextual dimensions that shape educational decision-making in low-income households. To do this, I raised the following research question: How do parents from low-income households narrate their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward their children's education?

I believe a study of this nature is especially important in rural regions because the parents' attitude is shaped not just by their understanding and outlook towards education and its potential benefits but also by an intricate interplay of local social and cultural dynamics, gender norms, economic boundaries and household necessities (Bajracharya & Bartlett, 2017). These necessities sometimes include child labor in farming, livestock care and domestic duties (Pherali, 2013). This situation is further exacerbated for girls because apart from traditional gender norms, their educational opportunity is also limited by concerns about safety during long commutes (UNICEF, 2022). Clearly, parental attitude plays a significant role in shaping children's educational journey and understanding these dynamics will help policy-makers (and change-makers) make informed decisions in formulating policies to improve equitable access to education.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

For this study, I have taken reference from two interrelated theoretical frameworks to understand parental attitudes toward education in rural Nepal.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1979) talks about how individual behaviour is shaped by the influence of microsystems (family) through exosystems (local institutions) to macrosystems (policy, culture). When analyzing how parental attitudes are shaped, it is necessary to look at the broader picture and understand how macro-level policies (e.g., Nepal's Free and Compulsory Education Act) interact with local-level realities (e.g., school infrastructure, local norms) and family-level constraints (poverty, labor demands).

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach

In exploring the concept of development, Amartya Sen included people's freedom to achieve the kind of life they value and their capability to achieve such a quality of life (Sen, 1999). This formed the base of his capability approach. Access to education, by that definition, is not just formal right but what individuals can actually do and be—their "real freedoms". In this study, which is focused on parents from low-income households, this theory helps understand how parents may lack the capabilities to provide schooling to their children due to various barriers, even if they understand and appreciate the value of education.

These two theories help identify the internal and external constraints that shape parental attitude towards education.

Thematic Dimensions

Economic and Opportunity Cost Barriers

Hossain (2010) identifies the tension between child labor and school attendance as one of the central barrier to education. This is true even now in Nepal where the dependency ratio is high and many families rely on subsistence farming or manual labor for their daily livelihood making schooling a luxury, even with free tuitions. Most parents' reluctance to send their children to school or support regular attendance stems from economic barriers which range from limited financial means for school supplies to child labor. The World Bank (2022) talks about learning poverty as children's inability to read a simple text, and this is higher among rural children, partly because they prioritize labor over schooling.

Gender Norms and Safety Concerns

Studies show that teenage girls are more susceptible to sexual abuse and so, many parents especially in rural Nepal refrain from sending them to school if the commute is long, lonely and difficult (UNICEF, 2024). Such safety fears, topped with domestic responsibilities and sometimes early marriage, mean that enrollment rate for girls is significantly lower in secondary-level (UNICEF, 2024). In Nepal's rural regions, once daughters are married off any salary they earn after marriage belongs to her husband/ family. Such practices discourage parents from educating their daughters since they are less likely to yield any benefits after marriage (Cameron, 2010). Reports by UNICEF (2021) show that in Dhading district more girls are dropping out of primary schools than the national average.

Accessibility and Infrastructure

A major factor that concerns parents perception of education is accessibility to schools. This is especially true in hilly regions where students must walk long distances, and are further affected during the monsoon season through difficult terrain (CBS, 2021). Many schools lack adequate infrastructure and have poor classrooms, either absent or unhygienic toilets, and water shortages, which deters parents from encouraging their children, especially girls, from attending regular classes. Mid-day meals also lack quality and quantity, so many parents don't see that as a compelling factor either (Frontiers in Education, 2022).

Migration and Educational Investment

Parents' migration to foreign countries for labor purposes shapes their decisions on providing education in conflicting ways. On the one hand, remittances can fund schooling; on the other, parental absence or reduced supervision due to migration can result in increase dropout risks or shift children into domestic roles (Adhikari & Hobley, 2011).

Policy Context and Empirical Reality

Nepal has introduced and implemented many policies and frameworks to ensure that all children have access to education. The Constitution of Nepal has made education at basic level compulsory and given parents the right to choose the type of education for their children. The School Education Sector Plan [SESP] (MoEST, 2022) is promoting universal access to education, multi-lingual instruction in classrooms, and school improvement grants. Post COVID-19 pandemic, the ReAL Plan (MoEST/IIEP, 2023) emphasized learning recovery with flexible learning calendars, and community schooling—particularly relevant to contexts with seasonal agricultural peaks. Nepal's Country Programme (2023–2027) also emphasizes equity, foundational skills, and community engagement.

Despite these frameworks, district-level reports (e.g., CEHRD FLASH 2080, 2024) show that many remote regions still lack basic WASH facilities. There are neither backup classrooms nor standardised transportation facilities. Clearly, without local alignment (which could include respecting parental values, seasonal rhythms, and trust dynamics within the community), center led reforms risk failing to address the realities of rural parents.

In an exploratory and innovative parent-school action learning cycle implemented by Khanal (2024) in Western Nepal, he found that involving parents in intervention mechanisms led to the re-enrollment of 40% more out-of-school children. These interventions included mid-day meals and managing teacher's accountability. Similarly, a qualitative study conducted by Edutrend Nepal (2024) shows that children whose parents had at least secondary education were able to perform significantly better in English literacy.

Slightly conflicting data from National surveys (UNICEF COAR 2022; UNICEF Data, 2023) shows that while enrolment rates are more than 90% for primary levels, the effective learning and transition metrics lag in remote communities. This could mean that parental enrollment decisions may not always align with hopes of meaningful education.

Clearly, there seems to be a paradox that is also central to this study and connects with my previous dilemma regarding parental attitude: parents from rural, low-income households value education but are often unable to act on that value due to intersecting economic, geographic, institutional, and cultural constraints. While national policy frameworks talk about inclusion and quality goals, parent-level perspectives and voices remain under-represented in shaping those frameworks into action. It is necessary to study parental attitude in more detail to inform context-sensitive interventions.

Methodology

To conduct this qualitative study, I used an interpretivist narrative paradigm. According to Schwandt (2015), such a paradigm believes that reality is socially constructed and can be understood through the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences. I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to record my participants' detailed stories and perspectives.

For my study, I selected Bhumesthan VDC of Dhading district not just because of my prior experience of visiting and conducting a study there, but also because of its geographic limitations and limited road access that made me wonder how students there get to their school every day. Most people there still have traditional ways of living and rely on agricultural livelihood, with some support from remittances from labor migration. Such intersection of geographic, infrastructural, economic and cultural limitations and my familiarity with the region made it an excellent location to conduct this study.

My research participants were six parents (three mothers and three fathers) who I selected purposively from low-income households with at least one school-aged child (between 6 to 16 years) based on the ward office's recommendation.

I conducted multiple rounds of interviews with each participant individually, and each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes. I prepared a brief interview guide in advance, and this guided my questions about the parents' own educational experiences, their aspirations for the education and future of their children, the barriers to education they were facing (including attending regular classes), and their views of government and I/NGO support.

After collecting the information, I transcribed it and translated it into English. I transcribed the information while I was at Dhading, so I was able to member-check the information with the participants to ensure correct interpretation, and cross-reference with the school officials on some information regarding their children's performance that they mentioned

during the interview. I then coded the information thematically and used narrative excerpts to illustrate each theme in order to preserve the participants' voices.

I collected verbal consent from each participant, and they were informed about their right to withdraw from the interview if they wanted to do so. Anonymity was maintained at all stages, and I have used pseudonyms for all participants.

Results

Following the analysis of the interview data, I identified four interrelated themes that, despite their distinct nature, overlap in ways that shaped the parents' decisions regarding their children's schooling. In this section, I discuss these themes in detail.

Theme 1: Aspirations and the Perceived Value of Education

All six parents expressed that they did not get adequate support from their own parents to complete their formal education, and their quality of life is due to their inability to explore the formal job market, being limited to manual labor and agricultural sustenance. Therefore, they expressed a desire for their children to have a "better life" than they themselves had experienced. They saw education as a bridge from agricultural and labor-based livelihood to formal employment and migration opportunities. A father (Ram) of a 9-year-old who recently dropped out of school reflected:

"I spent my entire childhood working hard in these fields that don't even belong to my family. As an adult, I am still tilling these fields, and I have nothing to show for my years of hard work except a bad back and poverty. I wanted to go to Dubai or Arab to earn some money, but even that takes investments and I don't have anything to register as collateral to apply for loans. I had enrolled my son into a public school with the hope and expectation that he would uplift my family from this dark web of poverty. But now, after his mother's surgery last year, even he has to drop out and help us in the fields. My daughter dropped out last year to help with domestic work and to care for her mother. Education was our only way out of poverty, but now that way is permanently blocked for us. Once we come out of this difficult period, I can only hope to re-enroll my boy back to public school, even if he loses out of a year or two."

Ram, and many parents like him, see education as a means of liberation from poverty. Some parents even tie a symbolic value to education as a marker of class and dignity. For them, education is not only a way towards a better quality of life and a current means of pride. These

parents reflected on how proud they would feel if their children worked in offices, wore "clean clothes," and used "pens instead of sickles." Yet, others were skeptical about whether education leads to secure employment. They talked about educated youth returning home to do farm work or migrating abroad for low-paid labor. One mother (Parvati) of a 13 year old daughter and 10 year old son noted:

"Even if they finish grade twelve, there is no guarantee of employment. I see boys with certificates but no jobs. I am investing so much money into my children's education that I can't help but wonder if they will just end up working in the fields like me or doing manual labor like their father. If that is the case, isn't my money completely wasted? I would much rather feed my family meat and rice with the money I am spending on their notebooks and pens."

There is a very apparent tension between hope for a brighter future and doubt regarding the capability of education to bring them the future economic security. That is why even though education is seen as desirable, parents don't seem to prioritize it when resources are scarce.

Theme 2: Economic Hardship and Livelihood Demands

One recurring theme in all parents' narratives was poverty. This was the most immediate and pervasive barrier to continuing schooling for all families. Parents frequently talked about having to decide between sending children to school and ensuring their households ran smoothly and everyone got to eat three meals a day. In many cases, the obvious choice was the latter. Parents chose to include their children in labor (most commonly agricultural and domestic, sometimes manual labor where either of their parents worked). Agricultural labor was seen to be essential during planting and harvest seasons.

Radha, who has three children, two of whom attend school, explained, "When the maize is ready for harvest, my daughter must help. If she misses classes, the teacher scolds her, but what can we do? Without food, there is no point in studying."

Even with Nepal's free education policy, parents must bear indirect costs such as uniforms, stationery, exam fees, and travel expenses. Several families described borrowing money or selling small livestock to cover school-related costs. Some parents spoke of the emotional strain of choosing which child to keep in school when resources were limited.

Economic hardship also intersected with uncertainty about returns on education, reinforcing a utilitarian approach: education was supported only when it did not significantly disrupt the household's immediate livelihood needs.

Theme 3: Gendered Expectations and Cultural Norms

Literature review on the role of gender expectations on education shows that girls are more likely to be taken out of school compared to boys to support household responsibilities, for early marriage, or during parents' economic hardships. In this study, it was evident that during such hardships, gender norms strongly influence parents' decisions about who attended school and for how long. While both boys and girls were enrolled in early grades, several fathers admitted that they would be more likely to continue paying for their sons' education beyond primary school compared to their daughters', if they could only afford to educate one of them.

Mahesh, who is the father of three girls and one boy, said:

"My wish was for all my children to be educated, but I neither have the means nor the money to do that. I have only one boy, and I must take responsibility for his good future. As for my girls, they are literate and they do their housework exceptionally well. I am sure I can find them good husbands once they are of age. Then they can rely on their husbands to live a good life. They won't be my responsibility after that. But my son is different. I have to be responsible for him. He must be educated enough to land a decent job. Only then will he marry a girl from a good family. He is the one who will look after me and my wife Uma in our old age. He is our only support. I can't possibly choose to educate one of the girls and let him rot at home."

His wife Uma added:

"Of course we will educate our boy. What my husband said make sense. Besides, the school is so far from home, we can't take the girls back and forth to school everyday. We have to work. If we send our daughters all alone, people will talk. They will say our girls have gone astray, and what good family will come to marry our daughter then? We can't take such a risk; it's better for them to learn housework. At least then people will say Uma has raised her girls well."

For girls, domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger siblings are seen to be more important and useful than schooling.

Theme 4: Infrastructural and Systemic Barriers

Some parents highlighted physical and institutional barriers as factors limiting access to education, which also significantly impacted their attitude regarding sending children to school. For one set of parents, their children had to wake up early every day and walk almost two hours each way to reach their school, and this was even more dangerous in the rainy season due to the risk of landslides. After undergoing such perilous journey, sometimes the teachers wouldn't be present, other times there wouldn't be enough desks and chairs in the classroom so they would have to sit on a mat on the floor to study. One father noted:

"Seeing my little boys and girls walk for so long to get to school, and not learn anything because the teacher did not show up, or the classroom was too overcrowded and noisy to concentrate, makes my blood boil. There is no access to clean drinking water or proper toilets. My children carry large bottles of water on top of their already heavy backpack. I don't think the education they are receiving is worth so much trouble and pain. I would much rather they stay home and maybe learn some life skill later on, such as plumbing or carpentry."

Lack of good performance in school as a result of all of these collective factors also discourages parents from supporting school education.

A mother raised concerns regarding lack of proper sanitation for girls. She said:

"Just few months back, my daughter got her first period and she was terrified. She didn't know what was happening, and the school had no proper support. Her female teacher wanted to help, but she didn't have any pads on her. So she sent my daughter home. By the time she reached home on foot, she had severe period cramps and she was in tears from the pain. Periods are such normal, monthly thing, but not a single person knew how to handle such a situation. The entire thing was so pathetic. Now, I make sure my daughter carries either a pad or a clean cloth every month in her backpack in case of an emergency. Once she gets her periods, I just make her stay home to rest and deal with her cramps."

Parents' frustrations also stemmed from their perceptions of slow and inadequate responses from local government bodies to requests for infrastructure improvements, such as repairing roofs, building toilets, or providing safe drinking water. Although seemingly insignificant, these factors shape parents'attitudes towards education in many ways.

Theme 5: Navigating Choices in Context

Despite facing the intersecting hurdles of economic, cultural, and infrastructural barriers, parents' attitude to education is not passive. Instead, parents regularly choose between their perceived value of continued schooling and their immediate livelihood needs, while also considering gender norms, the child's academic performance, and the accessibility of available schools.

To deal with this dilemma, some families adapted by enrolling their children in schools closer to home, even if the school does not meet their quality expectations, only to reduce travel time. Some parents alternated their children's attendance during peak agricultural seasons while others looked for informal tuition from neighbors to help their children keep up with their classes. Some parents also prioritized one child's education, often a son, in the hope that his eventual earnings could support siblings. As one father summarized:

"We want our children to study, but we must be practical. We see the road ahead, and we choose the path we can walk."

These narratives show that an intersection of many factors shapes parental attitude towards education. One common theme across all participants was an interplay between aspirations for a better future versus the pragmatism of their current lived reality. This directly influenced parents' attitudes towards education highlighting the importance of studying parental perspectives within their broader socio-economic and cultural realities.

Discussions

The findings of this study strongly support previous literature that positioned parental attitude as an intersection of aspiration and pragmatism (Bhatta, 2011; Pherali, 2013; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). In rural Dhading, parents clearly narrate their hope for their children's education and bright future. Still, their decision to provide schooling is based on their perception of the long-term economic and social benefits of education and their immediate constraints. For me, this tension seems similar to Walker's (2012) "cycle of low aspiration," with a clear difference that parents in rural Dhading don't lack ambition for their children, instead, they regularly make tough, calculated decisions to choose either their aspiration for long term benefit or an immediate solution to current constraints.

One of the major constraints they face was economic. This was especially true for households that depended on subsistence agriculture during peak season, and manual labor during off season. Parents' choices were often framed as a zero-sum calculation between a child's immediate contribution to household survival and their future earning potential. Often, parents ended up choosing immediate relief from economic hardships over their child's future despite their evident guilt.

Gendered cultural norms only add to the complications parents face. Similar to findings by Cameron (2010) and UNESCO (2020), this study shows parents' willingness to prioritize their sons' education over their daughters' due to its evident long term benefit and societal expectations.

When they are so evidently entangled, interventions cannot treat economic and culture barriers as separate entities. Instead, such programs must integrate economic incentives (such as scholarships, conditional cash transfers as rewards) with gender-sensitive community engagement.

These interventions must also be based on the context of the location. In geographically remote locations like Dhading, as highlighted by the World Bank's (2020) characterization of Nepal's rural education challenges, context-specific interventions such as community-based satellite schools, seasonal or flexible timetables, and mobile teacher units could be introduced. However, such models require sustained funding, community involvement, and integration into the formal education system. Throughout the process, one important element is proper communication channels between parents and schools. Parents' distrust towards the education system was also because of lack of communication channels in schools, so they could not voice their concerns or register their grievances. An easy way to mitigate this would be to create parent-teacher forums and school accountability committees to improve transparency.

Based on these observations, I believe policy frameworks addressing students' learning outcomes must go beyond enrollment rates and engage directly with the lived decision-making contexts of parents. Policy-makers must stop viewing parents as passive beneficiaries of their policies and start taking them as active agents navigating social, economic, cultural and structural constraints. Only then can children's access and parents' value of schooling be increased.

Conclusion

In this study, I examined how parents from low-income households in Bhumesthan VDC of Dhading perceive education and narrate their experiences and attitude towards their children's schooling. I was able to find a much nuanced interplay between aspiration and pragmatism. On the one hand, parents believe that education can uplift them from poverty and improve their livelihoods, and on the other hand, they are forced to choose immediate sustenance at the face of economic constraints, and cultural and structural hurdles. The findings of this study show that educational access cannot be fully understood through structural yardsticks only; it must be grounded in the lived realities of families

By using a narrative inquiry approach within an interpretivist paradigm, I call attention to the need to add a human element to research on education, which, in this case, has helped identify the need for context-specific interventions that address economic, cultural, and infrastructural barriers. This study clearly shows that policies must position parents as active partners in shaping educational futures.

The implications of this study are threefold. For policy, the interventions must be context specific and the support provided must match the need of the area. In case of Bhumesthan VDC, matching school calendar with agricultural cycles and providing targeted economic support to low-income households might be a good idea. For practice, there must be strong communication mechanism between school and families to build trust and increase transparency. This will motivate parents to continue their children's schooling and give them the assurance that their voices, in case of any grievances, will be heard and addressed. Parents and the community must also be involved in school governance during important decision making processes to increase transparency. Finally, further study must be conducted to explore the perspectives of teachers and students and assess the long-term impact of community-driven education models in remote regions. It is necessary to recognize and respond to the complexities of parental attitudes for Nepal to move beyond enrollment statistics towards equitable and sustainable education.

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The Evolution and Need for Indirect Techniques for Demographic Estimation

Shanta Upadhya (Adhikari)
Lecturer, Mahendra Ratna Campus TU, Kathmandu

Abstract

Indirect Technique refers to methods of estimating demographic measures such as fertility, mortality, and migration. The title of this study is the evaluation and need for indirect techniques for demographic estimation. The objectives of this study are to explore the descriptive analysis of indirect techniques and their concept, historical development, and contemporary necessity in demographic research.

This study is based on secondary sources of data, including academic notes, textbooks, and scholarly articles. These findings demonstrated the importance of both direct and indirect methods of demographic estimation. Some examples of direct estimation include censuses, vital registration system, and surveys. The study explores both direct and indirect demographic techniques are essential for estimating demographic data and correcting demographic errors.

Direct techniques of population estimation, includes the collection of population data through censuses, vital registration system, and sample surveys. However, indirect technique indicates this demographic estimation which is relatively straight forward to apply and produce more accurate demographic data by detecting inconsistencies and adjusting imperfect data. Both direct and indirect techniques of demographic estimation are essential for generating accurate and reliable demographic data and information, monitoring population changes over time, and supporting evidence-based policy formulation and development planning. Furthermore, indirect techniques or estimation developed across various countries enhance the comparability and validity of demographic analysis in data-deficient settings. So, indirect techniques play a central role in improving the quality of demographic data and are indispensable tools for demographers and policymakers working in contexts where direct demographic data are limited.

Background of the study

Demographic estimation consists of the attempt to measure key demographic parameters such as birth rate, death rate, and total fertility rate, especially in contexts where data is incomplete, inaccurate, or unavailable. In the case of developing countries including Nepal, direct estimation like census and civil registration systems may be unreliable or inconsistent. So, necessary of indirect techniques of demographic estimation is essential. Which play key role in understanding the areas of population dynamics including policy decision complete of empirical data (Thasineku, 2019). Thus, demographic estimation is relatively straightforward in countries with comprehensive and reliable census data and vital registration systems that accurately record births and deaths. However, such conditions are rare and primarily found in a limited number of developed nations. In many contexts, especially in developing countries or historical and anthropological populations, direct demographic data are often incomplete, inconsistent, or biased due to underreporting, misreporting, or gaps in registration systems. Subsequently, these kind of limitations necessitate the application of indirect techniques allow for researchers to infer demographic parameters through alternative sources of data and statistical models, thus improving the reliability of demographic analysis in data-deficient settings (Gage, 2010).

Concept of Demography and Population Studies
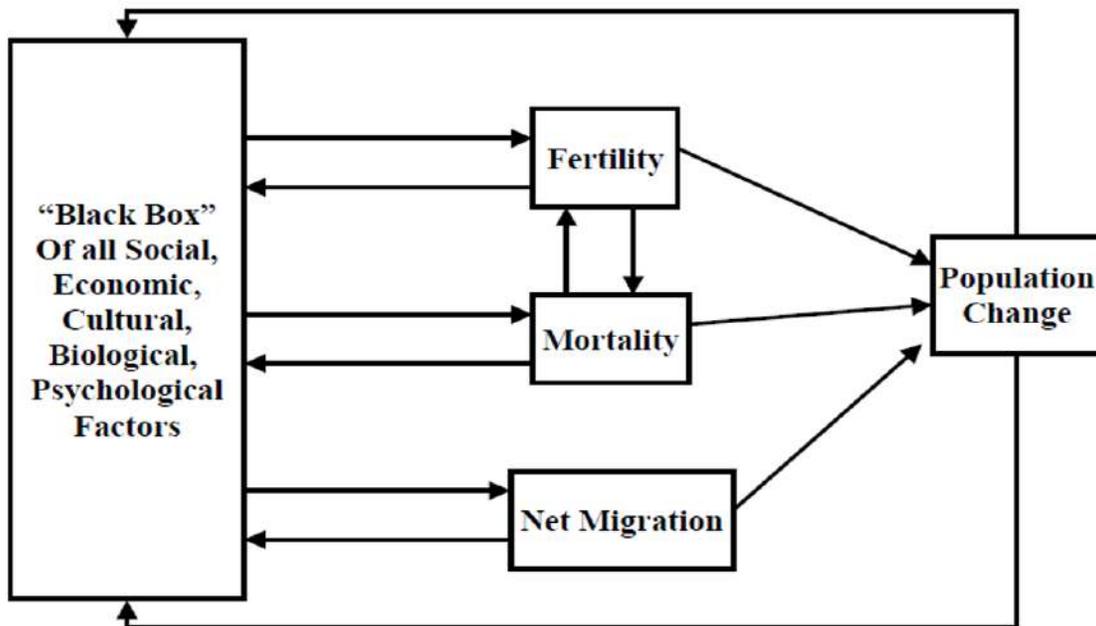
The above picture' name is "Black Box" which indicate the relationship between social, cultural, economic, cultural and psychological factors that indirectly influence population change by affecting demographic components of population changes like fertility mortality and migration population change by influencing demographic components of population including fertility mortality and migration.

Fertility indicates the actual childbearing preferences of women in their reproductive child bearing age. Which is affected by various socio-economic and cultural beliefs and psychological factors.

Mortality represents the incidence of death in a population during the given time periods. Which is influenced by various health, nutrition, lifestyle and environmental conditions.

Migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another for specific place in specific time periods.

Typically, a woman's reproductive lifespan ranges from ages 15 to 49 (Rai, Pareek, Joshi, & Tiwari, 2018).

Direct measures of demographic estimation such as, the census, vital registration system, sample survey, and admirative records. These methods are generally most accurate in developing countries. However, in developing countries, including Nepal, errors often occur due to the irregularity and incomplete coverage of some direct techniques, particularly the vital registration system.

The term "indirect "in demographic estimation refers to methods or techniques that produce estimates of demographic parameters based on information that is only indirectly related to their actual values. Demographic estimation consists to measure the fundamental parameters, such as the birth rate, the death rate, and the total fertility rate even under less-than-perfect data conditions. These basic Parameters are important and essential for understanding the way in which a population will evolve, in terms of size and age structure, over time

A balancing equation (component method) is an example.

$$P_t - P_o = (B - D) + (I - O) + \in$$

Where,

Pt-P0   = net population change during intercensal period;

B-D   = rate of natural increase during intercensal period;

I-O   = net migration during intercensal period; and

∈   = error term.

In the context of Nepal, as well as developing countries, indirect techniques of demographic estimation is important. So, accurate, reliable and comprehensive data are often lacking. In this situation, indirect estimation of demographic techniques serves as essential tools for analyzing population dynamics. These technique of demographic estimation, including the Brass P/F ratio and logistic curve functions helps to estimation of demographic data. These are important indicators like fertility and mortality rates in the absence of reliable estimation of demographic data. Indirect techniques play central role in the case of inconsistencies and inaccurate data. In this situation. Their application is particularly significant during demographic transition, as they provide and helps and supports effective for demographers, academic inquiry planning and policy formulation. (Bijaya Mani Devkota, 2024). Demographic estimation of demographic techniques Demographic parameters and techniques denotes to essential grounded methods, which is used to estimate or calculate or estimate of demographic parameters. These techniques play key roles and they are theoretically guided, mathematically correct and methodologically rigorous. Different straightforward measures, the information used is not always directly related, and the process of estimation is often indirect, trusting on systematic scientific approaches to derive accurate demographic insights. According to (Lucciano, 2023) indirect techniques is a demographic estimation method that uses in consistency checks of conventional data in an unconventional way. Generally speaking, the methods of estimating reliability and validity related to demographic elements and statistics is called indirect method. It calculates more accurate rates, ratio, etc. using various demographic patterns in addition to detecting errors in data. It is one of the most important techniques in demographic estimation. It is the methods adopted to reduce the mistakes made by direct techniques. This helps to reduce the statistical errors associated with the population. There are errors in the various rates and

proportions calculated based on the data obtained from various sources such as census, vital registration system, sample survey etc. which is based on direct techniques. Indirect techniques are one which calculated indict way and minimize the errors.

Indirect techniques in demographic estimation are methods used to estimate various demographic parameters or characteristics when direct data collection is not feasible or unavailable. These techniques rely on alternative sources of information or use models and assumptions to infer demographic measures. They are commonly used in situations where traditional direct data collection methods, such as censuses or surveys, are difficult, expensive, or impractical to conduct UN (1983).

Purpose of indirect techniques

The purpose of obtaining reliable and valid estimates of demographic parameters is defined by as involving three key objectives: using conventional data in unconventional ways, performing consistency checks to ensure data accuracy, and applying demographic models to improve estimation processes.

Indirect techniques of demographic estimation

  i.   Brass P/F ratio methods used to estimate of total fertility rate used to by comparing current fertility with cumulative fertility from older cohorts. This method adjusts for age misreporting and incomplete birth histories.
 ii.   Orphanhood method used to estimate adult mortality by analyzing the proportion of respondents whose mothers or fathers have died. It assumes a stable age distribution and known fertility patterns.
iii.   Indirect methods with sisterhoods methods used to estimate maternal mortality by asking respondents about the survival rates of their sisters. It is especially useful in settings with high maternal mortality and weak health information systems.
 iv.   Model Life Tables like, United National models, Coale-Demeny models, allow to estimation of age specific mortality rate and life expectancy rates using partial data inputs.
  v.   Techniques of Synthetic cohort, which is used to estimate demographic estimation based on hypothetical cohorts, allow to analysis to simulate long term outcomes from short term data.

Results

In this section, discusses several important aspects related to indirect techniques, including their needs, importance, uses, evaluation and their limitations.

Evaluation of Demographic Estimation

Traditionally, demographic estimation has relied on data collected through censuses and vital registration systems, which continuously record vital events such as births, deaths, marriages, and divorces when these data sources function perfectly, direct calculation of demographic parameters is possible. Although, in the case of many developing countries like Nepal, vital registration systems are incomplete or irregular. That kind of situation, the data are poor quality inaccurate due to underreporting of demographic events like births deaths, or incorrect recording of demographic events like, births, deaths and migration including age at deaths or mothers' parity. Similarly direct estimation like data of census explore often suffer from coverage errors including over counts and under counts. These kinds of issues seen at the time of age reporting, which, affects the accuracy of population by age and sex. To address this kind of challenges, demographers have developed indirect techniques of demographic estimation that enable accurate estimation despite inaccurate data. According to the development of such techniques has focused on either robust method for analyzing traditional data or on designing survey questions that provide sufficient information to permit indirect estimation of demographic phenomena.

The use of indirect techniques of demographic estimation is essential not only for estimation demographic parameters but also directing and minimizing hidden errors in the time of data collection and measurement, ensuring accurate reliable demographic analysis and also better monitoring of trends of population and development (Rai et al., 2018).

Demographers have developed a range of indirect estimation techniques to monitor and evaluate population and development, following two main approaches: refining methods to analyze data from traditional systems, and designing survey questions that can accurately capture key demographic information to enable indirect estimation. To achieve globally comparable data and methods, surveys and censuses use specific questions aimed at minimizing omissions for example, asking respondents separately about children living with them, children living elsewhere, and children who have died. Summing responses to these detailed questions provides a

more accurate count of children ever born, often differentiated by sex through a set of six targeted questions UN (1983).

Importance of indirect techniques

In demographic estimation consists of the attempt to measures values of basis demographic parameter such as birth rates, death rates and so on. Indirect techniques of demographic estimation play significance role to minimize the errors of population data   The importance of demographic estimation lies in its ability to describe assumptions, actual models, and their applications for estimating demographic parameters through indirect techniques. These techniques are particularly valuable because they are relatively easy to apply, allowing researchers and policymakers to derive meaningful demographic insights even when direct data are incomplete or unreliable Bijaya Mani Devkota and Devkota (2011). Indirect techniques of demographic estimation have been used in developing countries including Nepal, where direct estimation like vital registration system reflect irregularity and or poor quality. So, it is necessary to conduct indirect techniques of demographic parameters when the measures in questions at that time when the fertility and mortality rates are not easily available (Singh, Karunakara, Burnham, & Hill, 2004).

Indirect techniques of demographic estimation are essential aspects of demographic research, especially in contexts where complete data are lacking, such as in historical demography or much of the developing world. One example of some indirect methods is the sisterhood method, where women report on the survival and reproductive histories of their sisters. Which enables researchers to estimate birth and death rate indirectly. Furthermore, surveys that collect information about siblings, parents and children provide valuable insights into demographic patterns. In both historical and in modern settings, demographic modeling tools cover fertility, mortality, disability, marriage and population growth. These indicators play a key role in analyzing population dynamics.

Long-term, nationally representative cohort studies, such as those in Britain, continue to offer valuable data on generational differences in health, education, attitudes, childbearing, and employment, even without direct enumeration (Lucciano, 2023).

Uses of Indirect Demographic techniques

Indirect techniques of demographic estimation are very useful tools for estimating demographic parameters. they play a central role to minimizing the errors of direct techniques

and providing reliable and valid data. These techniques also help to produce demographic data at regular interval, which is essential for continuous monitoring.

These techniques offer nearly accurate demographic information, making them valuable tools for policymakers involved in population and development planning. By addressing data problems commonly found in various sources, indirect methods improve the quality of demographic analysis, especially in developing countries where data collection systems may be weak. Furthermore, estimation of indirect techniques from different countries to enhance estimation accurateness by helping to solve the challenges and supports the population data challenges and supports evidence-based decision making.

Needs of indirect techniques

Tradionally, direct demographic estimation methods such as censuses, vital registration systems, sample surveys have been developed to estimate demographic parameters. However, in many developing countries including Nepal, vital registration system has not regular interval. As a result, accurate information is not found. So, indirect techniques are essential. However, this ideal scenario assumes both systems are flawless, which is rarely the case. In many countries, vital registration systems either do not exist or perform poorly, leading to severely flawed direct estimates due to issues like failure to record all vital events such as child or adult deaths or inadequate recording of event characteristics like age at death, mother's age at birth, or parity. Similarly, censuses are prone to errors such as undercounts, overcounts, or multiple counts, and frequently suffer from poor age reporting, which complicates the accurate classification of population by age and sex, further affecting the reliability of demographic estimates (UN, 1983); (Gurung, 2079).

The demographic estimation is an essential aspect of demographic estimation, in that it trusts direct demographic techniques like censuses, vital registration systems and sample survey data when registration systems are incomplete, especially in the case of child mortality. Indirect techniques of demographic estimation of child mortality involve asking mothers about their children regarding child mortality of children ever born and surviving, then transforming the proportion of decreased children into life table measures. (Guedes, Siviero, Queiroz, & Machado, 2011).

Discussion

The study emphasizes the critical role of indirect methods in demographic estimation, especially when direct data collection is either impractical or impossible. Indirect techniques serve as scientifically guided, mathematically sound, and methodologically rigorous approaches that allow researchers to estimate demographic parameters by using alternative data sources or models based on assumptions. This study highlights that in order to estimate demographic patterns and minimize the errors in population data, indirect techniques are very crucial.

Traditional method of estimating demography is heavily based on censuses and vital registration systems, which records events like births, deaths, and migration. However, in the context of developing countries like Nepal, these data sources are usually found incomplete due to misreported ages, underreporting, and unrecorded events (Gurung, 2079). These gaps are addressed through indirect techniques with the application of models and check consistency to adjust and correct data so as to produce more reliable estimates than direct methods.

The findings also indicate that indirect techniques can produce more accurate rates of demography by finding out errors in the data sources and analyzing pattern. The indirect techniques are also the relatively simple to apply. They support the consistency of censuses, surveys, and vital registration systems, supporting the policymakers to monitor population change more effectively. Furthermore, these methods allow for the estimation of demographic changes over time intervals, which is very essential for planning and development. Various demographic models also develop accuracy in settings in which there is a poor data quality and a weak collection system (Devkota & Devkota, 2011).

Despite all the importance of indirect techniques, they also have certain limitations. These techniques are based on certain models and assumptions that may not reflect local demographic realities completely (G.C. & Adhikari, 2075). However, they correct the incorrect data providing accurate estimates. Due to this, they are considered as a valuable tool in demographic research and practice.

Conclusion

Indirect techniques of demographic estimation are mostly used when direct data are unavailable or incomplete. They generate a valid and accurate demographic information. These methods rely on standardized models and alternative data sources. The methods also infer demographic measures, reducing the problems and minimizing the inaccurate figures in

population. This method eases the process of application and helps to detect and correct the errors making them useful in the context of weak data collection systems.

Indirect techniques play a vital role to understand the population dynamics, monitor the changes in demography and support policy and planning and improve the accuracy of demographic estimates. Although they are based on assumptions that may not perfectly capture local realities, their contribution to produce consistent, comparable, and scientifically sound statistics remains significant. Ultimately, these methods are very essential for both policymakers and researchers who are concerned with population and development. They ensure an accurate and evidence-based demographic information that is suitable for long-term planning.

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Knowledge on First Aid Management of Injury among Workers at Honda Service Centre

Simran Nakarmi [1] & Bhawana Kandel [2*]

[1]Kirtipur Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal

[2]Phect Institute of Health Sciences, Kathmandu Nepal

[*]Corresponding author

Abstract

First aid is the initial, emergency care given to anyone with a minor or serious disease or injury, with the goal of preserving life, preventing the condition from getting worst or promoting recovery. The objective of the study was to identify the Knowledge regarding First Aid Management of Injuries among Workers at Honda Service Centers at Kathmandu. A descriptive cross-sectional study design was conducted among 60 Workers of Honda Service Centers. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to measure the research variable regarding Knowledge regarding First Aid Management of Injuries among Workers at Honda Service Centers. The study was conducted at the Honda Service Center among 60 automobile workers. The result of the study showed that more than half of the respondents 33(55%) had a low level of Knowledge, 11 (18.3%) had a moderate knowledge level and 16 (26.7%) had a higher level of Knowledge. There was no statistically significant association between the socio-demographic variables with level of education, duration of work. The study concluded that more than half of the respondents had a low level of Knowledge on first aid management, and only a few of them had moderate and high levels of knowledge. A larger study could be done among a larger population of different automobile companies for generalization.

Key Words: Automobile workers, first aid, injuries, level of Knowledge

Introduction

First aid comprises the immediate evaluation and basic interventions provided by a bystander or the individual affected, typically with minimal or no medical equipment (Goel & Singh, 2008). First aid knowledge refers to the methods and techniques used to prevent and respond promptly to health emergencies. It can be given in various settings, including homes, schools, workplaces, and recreational areas (Kumar et al., 2013).

An occupational hazard refers to any condition or situation that could potentially cause harm to a worker. Among automobile mechanics, four main types of hazards have been identified: chemical hazards, biological hazards, mechanical hazards, and physical hazards (Elenwo, 2018).

Mechanics, panel beaters (auto body repairers), spray painters, auto electricians, welders, radiator repair specialists, brake master cylinder repairers, and bumper repairers are among the auto repair artisans. They provide upkeep and repair services like Welding, painting, and other services (Akowe, 2023; Azuike et al., 2017).

Automobile workers are vulnerable to injuries and accidents, may face severe accidents resulting in cut, burn, fractures, bleeding, and fainting thus, first aid becomes as important as taking a worker to a medical facility. First aid aims to alleviate pain, promote the healing process, and limit further injury or deterioration. The initial response to injuries or common illnesses often plays a critical role in determining the clinical outcome and the risk of subsequent complications (Goel & Singh, 2008; Markenson et al., 2010). In the global workplace, there were 481,429 deaths in GBD 2010, 159,000 in GBD 2013, and 203,677 in GBD 2015 due to occupational risk factors or accident hazards (Takala et al., 2017).

In Ghana, a study conducted on Occupational health and safety practice among vehicle repair artisans showed that out of 100 vehicle repair artisans, 64% had sustained work-related injuries, primarily from cuts and burns, 78% lacked training in fire safety**,** 55% practiced self-medication**,** and 92% were unaware of first aid administration, with firefighting equipment notably absent from the workshops (Monney et al., 2014). Similarly, in Ethiopia, one-year and two-week prevalence of occupational injury were 42.7% (128) and 6.7% (20), respectively. The most common injuries each year were abrasions (32; 10.7%), eye injuries (23; 7.7%), and hand injuries. (38; 12.7%) and eyes (23; 7.7%) were the most frequently injured body parts, and machinery (68; 22.2%) and falling/slipping (19; 6.3%) were the leading causes of injury. The two

most common causes of injury were a lack of safety training (18; 6%) and a lack of personal protective equipment (59; 19.7%) (Damtie & Siraj, 2020).

Similarly, in Uganda, a field observation in 2019 on health and safety procedures in vehicle maintenance workshops found that 70% of workers reported injuries, with burns, hand cuts, and bruises being the most frequent (Serubiri, 2019).   In Nepal, a cross-sectional descriptive study across Kathmandu and Bhaktapur found that of the total 505 injury cases, 93 cases (18.5%) were work-related**,** showing a significant burden of occupational injuries in urban auto repair environments (Joshi & Shrestha, 2009). In relation to awareness   about first aid a study conducted among 400 automobile repair artisans in Kathmandu showed that 56% were aware of at least one occupational hazard, with the most common being heat (53%), electric current (52.8%), and chemical exposure (52.5%) (Paudel et al., 2015) A study conducted in Iran among 219 workers showed that the relief workers had an average knowledge score of 56.5% regarding first aid measures (Delavar et al., 2012) Similarly, a survey of 120 registered car mechanics in Lagos State, Nigeria's Surulere Local Government Area revealed that more than 75% of participants were aware of physical hazards (Ozomata et al., 2022).

A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, two of Nepal's largest cities. Ninety-three (18.5%) of the 505 injury cases that were reported in the study were work-related (Joshi S K &Shrestha 2009). In 2015, a descriptive study was conducted among automobile repair artisans in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Nepal, regarding their awareness of occupational hazards and related factors, 56% out of 400 vehicle repair artisans had awareness of the risks associated with their occupation. Personal protection equipment was used by 44.3% of craftspeople. According to the auto repair artisans, the most frequent hazards were heat (53%), electric current (52.8%), chemical (52.5%), light/radiation (52.3%), welding fumes (48.8%), sharp metals/cuts (42%), noise (41%), sparks (17.5%), internal environment (12.8%), and vibration (11.3%) (Marahatta et al., 2018a).

Providing First aid (FA) provision at the workplace during or after an injury may reverse unpleasant effects on the worker's life and health. As a result, a crucial component of occupational health and safety prevention is educating employees in FA. An injured patient can receive adequate and lifesaving care if they have the necessary FA knowledge and training. . (Kumar & Chivukula, 2023).

Recognizing that adequate knowledge among workers can handle emergencies, stabilize an injured individual and support professional medical services upon arrival, this study was

conducted with the objective of assessing the knowledge regarding injury prevention among workers at Honda Crevice Center.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

For this study, a descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted because it is non-experimental and provides an accurate description of the traits of a person, circumstance, or group as well as the frequency with which a particular phenomenon occurs in a natural setting without imposing any control or manipulation.

 Research Area/ Setting.

The research was conducted at selected auto garages authorized by Honda Company of Kathmandu valley, where automobile repairing was done, as there were many incidences of injuries in that work setting. Workers working in these automobile repair shops are from different places of Nepal having diverse socioeconomic and cultural background.

Study Population and Sampling

The workers who were actively engaged in automobile repairing at Honda Service Centers in Kathmandu were the study population for this study. Non-probability purposive sampling technique with the census method was used. The sample size for this study was 60 workers of the Honda crevice center of Kathmandu.

Research Instrument/Tools:

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to measure the research variable regarding Knowledge on First Aid Management of Injury among Workers at the Honda Service Centre. The questionnaire was developed by researchers in simple and understandable language. The questionnaire was divided in two parts: Part I: Semi-structured questions related to socio-demographic Information. Part II: Structured questions related to first aid management of injury. The tool was developed in the English language and translated it into Nepali language and back translated in English to find out the original meaning of it.

Data Collection Procedure

At first, approval was taken from Syakar Trading Company Pvt. Ltd. (Honda). Data was collected via semi semi-structured interview schedule. It was collected through the face-to-face interview in a working setting. At first, the study purpose and objective were explained and written consent was taken from the respondents. The time for the interview of each Respondent was approximately 25-30 minutes. Data was collected from Kartik 16th to Kartik 26th, 2077.

Ethical Consideration

The approval to perform research was obtained from Syakar Trading Company Pvt. Ltd. (Honda). Informed consent was taken from respondents. The objectives and information of the study were explained in clear and understandable terms to the respondent. Anonymity was maintained by ensuring that no identifying information such as names, addresses, or email addresses, was collected from participants."Anonymity was established by ensuring that no identifying information (e.g., name, address, Email address, etc) was collected from participants and code numbers as 1, 2 ,3 were used. Confidentiality was maintained by not disclosing their information and was used only for research purposes. Human rights and justice of the respondent were maintained during the study without any discrimination of age, ethnicity, and socio-economic condition.

Data Processing and analysis process

SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 16 was used to analyze the data. For this study, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi square chi-square) were used.

Findings of the Study

Based on the study's objectives, responses obtained from participants were analyzed using statistical methods. The results were presented in tabular form in order to facilitate their interpretation.

Table 1

Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent %
Age in group		
Young adult(18-35years)	47	78.33
Middle adult(36-60years)	13	21.67
Education		
Can read and write	12	20
Basic	10	16.67
Secondary	16	26.67
Higher education	22	36.67
Duration of employment		
Month (≥6 months≤12month)	8	13.33
Year	52	86.67
Average working hourper day		
3-4hrs	6	10
5-6hrs	5	8.33
7-8hrs	22	36.67
8hrs or above	27	45

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Among 60 respondents, all of them were male. Majority of respondents 47(78.33%) were of age group young adult (18- 35years) whereas, 13(21.67%) were in age group middle adult (36-60years). Regarding educational level, 22(36.67%) of the respondents had higher secondary level. In relation to working duration, the majority of the respondents 52(86.67%) had the work experience of 1- 15 years. Likewise, nearly half of the respondents 27(45%) answered the average working hour per day as 8 hours or above.

Table 2

Level of Knowledge regarding First Aid Management of Injuries

Description	Number	Percentage
Low knowledge level (0-59)	33	55
Moderate knowledge level (60-79)	11	18.3
High knowledge level (60-79)	16	26.7

Table 2 shows the Level of Knowledge regarding First Aid Management of Injuries. More than fifty percent 33 (55%) of the respondents had a low level of Knowledge, 11 (18.3%) of them had a moderate level and 16 (26.7%) of them had a high level of knowledge.

Table 3

Safety Measures Used by Respondents for Prevention of Injury

Description	Number	Percentage
PPE used to prevent injury*		
Gloves	55	91.6
Masks	47	78.3
Boots	50	83.3
Eye shields	29	48.3

Table 3 shows safety Measures Used by Respondents for the Prevention of Injury. The majority 55(91.6 %) of the respondents, put on gloves, 50 (83.3 %) wore boots, 47(78.3 %) used masks, and 29(48.3) wore eye shields as the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to prevent injury while repairing automobiles.

Table 4

Injuries Faced by Workers while Working

Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Injury suffered while working		
Cut injury	54	90
Burn injury	35	58.3
Fall injury	27	45
Eye Injury	34	56.6
Training received before		
Yes	15	25
No	45	75

Table 4 reveals the injuries faced by workers. A maximum 54 (90%) of the respondents had faced cut injury, 35 (58.3%) suffered burn injury, 27 (45%) faced fall injury and 34 (56.6%) faced eye injury while working. A majority 45 (75%) of the respondents had not received training on first aid management before joining the company.

Table 5

Source of Information regarding First Aid Management

Description	Number	Percent %
Source of information about first aid		
Newspaper	12	20
Books	32	53.33
Radio	4	6.67
Television	12	20

Table 5 illustrates the source of information regarding First Aid Management, , 32(53.33%) of the respondents answered books, 12(20%) answered newspaper and television, and only 4(6.67%) replied radio as the source of information about first aid management.

Table 6

Association between Socio Demographic Variable and Knowledge Level

Variable	Low knowledge level	Moderate knowledge level	High knowledge level	Chi-square	P-value
Age in group					
Young adult	25	18	4	1.24	0.54
Middle adult	8	5	0		
Education					
Informal education	7	4	1	6.55	0.37
Primary	8	2	0		
Secondary	8	8	0		
Higher secondary	10	9	3		
Duration of employment					
Month (≥6 months,≤12 months)	7	1	0	3.99	0.14
Years	22	26	4		

Table 6 reveals the association between socio-demographic variables and the level of knowledge. There is no statistically significant association between age, education and duration of employment and the level knowledge.

Key findings

Regarding Socio- demographic information, all 60 respondents were male. Majority of the respondents 47 (78.33%), were young adults (18–35 years), Similarly only 10 (16.67%) of the respondents had Basic level of education. In relation to duration of Employment most of the respondents 52 (86.67%) had worked for 1–15 years. Regarding working hours per day nearly half 27 (45%) of the respondents worked 8 hours or more.

Regarding the level of knowledge on first aid management, more than half 33 (55%) of the respondents had low level of Knowledge.

Regarding safety measures used by the respondents, 55 (91.6%) of the respondents put on gloves, 50 (83.3%) wore boots, 47 (78.3%) used masks and 29 (48.3%) of them used eye shields as personal Protective Equipment to prevent injury.

In relation to injuries experienced by workers, 54 (90%) of the respondents had faced cut injury and only 27 (45%) of them experienced fall injuries.

Regarding association between level of knowledge and sociodemographic information, age, education, and duration of employment showed no statistically significant association with knowledge level, as all p-values were > 0.05. This means none of these socio-demographic factors significantly influenced first aid knowledge among respondents.

Discussion

The present study was carried out t o assess Knowledge on First Aid Management of Injuries among Workers at the Honda Service Center to assess Knowledge on First Aid management of Injuries among Workers at Honda Service Center. All of the respondents in this study were men, and 47 (78.33%) of them were between the ages of 18 and 35. The results of the current study differed with those of a survey conducted in Akure South Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria, which revealed that the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 50. Regarding work experience, a majority of the respondents 52(86.67%) had the work experience of 1- 15 years which was supported by the same study which showed, the majority had over 15years of working experience (Elemile et al., 2019). Regarding educational level 22(36.67%) o f t h e respondents had higher secondary level of education which is in contrast with the study findings of UMOH et al., 2023 which showed that one hundred and thirty-eight (59.23%) had junior high school. Regarding training, a majority of the respondents 45 (75%) had not received training on first aid management which was supported by the study conducted in Ghana, which showed that 78% of the artisans lack training (Monney et al., 2014). This finding of the present study was also supported by the study done in Greece which showed that 196 respondents have never have a formal training on first aid (group B) (Hatzakis et al., 2005).

In addition, injuries faced by workers in the present study maximum 54 (90%) of the respondents had faced cut injury, 35 (58.3%) suffered burn injury, 27 (45%) faced fall injury and 34 (56.6%) faced eye injury while working. These findings were supported by a research that used field observation to examine health, safety, and environmental processes in a motor vehicle maintenance workshop. The study revealed that all activities and equipment present a variety of

risks and hazards, with 70% of the workers reporting injuries. The most common injuries reported were burns, hand cuts, and bruising (Serubiri, 2019). The results of the current study were also supported by a survey conducted in India, where 63% of workers reported workplace injuries in the previous year. The most common injuries recorded were burns, bruising, cuts, and piercing items. The primary body parts injured were the hands and fingers (Vyas et al., 2011). This result was also supported by a research conducted in Ghana, which revealed that 64% of the craftspeople had suffered burns and cuts at work (Monney et al., 2014).

In the present study regarding the safety measures used, majority 55(91.6 %) of the respondents, put on gloves, 50 (83.3 %) wore boots, 47(78.3 %) used masks, and 29(48.3 %) wore eye shields as the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to prevent injury while repairing automobiles this result was in contrast with the study results done in Ghana, showed that use of PPE (27%) and proper hand hygiene practices (28%; N = 98) are generally ignored by the artisans posing possible health risks (Monney et al., 2014). In relation to source of information, more than half of the respondents, 32(53.33%) answered books as source of information this finding was in contrast with the study finding of study done in India showed that majority of the samples 20 (33.3%) were getting information from mass media (Dwivedi, 2018).

In terms of knowledge, 33 respondents (55%) had poor knowledge, 11 respondents (18.3%) had moderate knowledge, and 16 respondents (26.7%) had high knowledge. This result was supported by research conducted in Ghana, which revealed that local garage workers knew a little bit about safety precautions (Akple et al., 2014).In- contrast, research conducted in Nepal revealed that 56% of respondents were aware of occupational hazards (Marahatta et al., 2018b) and also in contrast with the findings of the study done in India which showed that knowledge related to Management & Prevention of industrial accidents is 48% (Dwivedi, 2018) also in contrast with the study finding of the study, the finding showed that most participants had a poor knowledge level (87.5 %) (Minani et al., 2024).Similarly, regarding the causes of injury, 44(73.3%) respondents answered improper handling of equipment as the cause of injury, 33(55%) answered equipment, 28(46.6%) replied chemicals and 19(31.6%) answered environment as the causes of injury, the study on awareness of occupational hazards and related factors among automobile repair artisans in Kathmandu Metropolitan City supported these findings. According to the artisans, heat (53%) was the most common hazard, followed by electric current (52.8%), chemical (52.5%), light/radiation (52.3%), welding fumes (48.8%), sharp metals/cuts (42%), noise (41%), sparks (17.5%), internal environment (12.8%), and vibration (11.3%) (Marahatta et

al., 2018b). In the present study, there was no association between the socio-demographic variables (age, level of education, duration of work) of the respondents and the level of knowledge of the respondents. The finding was in contrast with the study finding of the study done in Egypt, showed that workers' awareness was strongly correlated with their educational attainment, age group (> 35 years old), length of employment, and prior safety procedure training (Zalat & Shetta, 2012) as well as in contrast to the results of a study conducted by Monney et al., 2014, which revealed that respondents' marital status (P=0.014) and the type of work (P=0.037) were found to be significantly associated with the incidence of physical injury, in contrast to their level of education (P=0.874) and work experience (P=0.203) (Monney et al., 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The present study was done to assess Knowledge on First Aid Management of Injuries among Workers at the Honda Service Centre. All of the respondents were male. More than half of the respondents were in the young adult age group, and nearly half of them had received higher education. The majority of them had been working there for years. Among the respondents, only few of them had received training on first aid management before joining the company. The study concluded that more than half of the respondents had a low level of knowledge on first aid management and only a few of them had moderate and higher levels of knowledge. Also, there was no association between the socio-demographic variables (age, level of education, duration of work) and the level of knowledge of the respondents. As the sample of the study is limited only to workers of one company, it is recommended that further research should be done among the workers of different companies with a larger sample and the study among different companies could be compared.

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आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको स्वरूप

धर्मानन्द पन्त

लेखसार

प्रस्तुत लेखको शीर्षक 'आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको स्वरूप' रहेका छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूपको वर्णन गर्नु यस लेखको उद्देश्य रहेको छ । यस अध्ययनमा पुस्तकालयीय कार्य र सहभागीसँगको खुला अन्तर्वार्ताबाट सामग्रीहरू सङ्कलन गरिएको छ । प्राप्त तथ्यहरूलाई अध्ययन गरी तिनका मुख्य आशय तथा थिमलाई संक्षेपमा वर्णन गरिएको छ । वर्णनात्मक विधिको उपयोग गरिएको यस अध्ययनमा गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान ढाँचाको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । आख्यानात्मक विधाको विकास श्रुतिपरम्पराबाट भएको पाइन्छ । यसको लामो परम्परा हुनुका साथै लोकप्रिय पनि छ । एउटा आख्यानात्मक रचनाका लागि कथावस्तु, कथानक, कथा, पात्र तथा चरित्र-चित्रण, विचारतफ्व, परिप्रेक्ष्य, पर्यावरण, प्रतीक र बिम्ब, समय, गति र लय, भाषा : बुनोट र संरचना आदिको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । यी समग्र तफ्वहरूका आधारमा आख्यानको शिक्षण सिकाइ सहजीकरण गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । आख्यान विधा मूलतः श्रव्य पाठ्य विधा हो । यसमा घटनालाई काल्पनिक चरित्रका माध्यमबाट अभिव्यक्त गरिन्छ । यस विधाका माध्यमबाट विभिन्न सिकाइ कार्यकलाप गराउन सकिन्छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइ सहजीकरण सरल हुनुका साथै विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि रूचिप्रद पनि छ । यसले सिकाइ दिगो बनाउन मद्दत गर्दछ ।

शब्द कुञ्जी : *आख्यानात्मक विधा, गद्याख्यान, भाषा सिकाइ, माध्यमिक तह, सिकाइ अनुभव*

अध्ययनको परिचय

आख्यान विधा साहित्यका मुख्य चार विधा कविता, आख्यान, नाटक र निबन्धमध्ये लोकप्रिय विधा हो । संस्कृतको 'ख्या' धातुमा 'ल्युट' प्रत्यय र 'आ' उपसर्ग लागेर आख्यान शब्द बनेको हो । व्युत्पत्तिका आधारमा यस शब्दले भन्नु, घोषणा गर्नु, समाचार सुनाउनु आदि अर्थ दिन्छ । आख्यान शब्दले कथा र उपन्यास दुवै विधालाई जनाउँछ । आख्यान शब्दको व्यवहार आधुनिक साहित्यालोचनामा विशेष गरी कथा र उपन्यासको साभा संज्ञाकै रूपमा हुने गरेको भए पनि अङ्ग्रेजीको फिक्सन शब्दको व्युत्पत्तिगत अर्थतिर ध्यान दिँदा

आख्यानात्मकता वा फिक्सनालिटी खाली कथा र उपन्यास मात्रको लक्षण नभएर समस्त साहित्यकै लक्षण ठहरिन्छ (नेपाल, सन् २००५, पृ.२२) । आख्यान तफ्व खण्डकाव्य, महाकाव्य, नाटक आदि विधामा पनि पाइन्छ । यद्यपि कथा र उपन्यास यी दुई गद्याख्यानलाई प्रमुख मानिन्छ । कथा र उपन्यास विधालाई नेपालको विद्यालयदेखि विश्वविद्यालय तहसम्मको पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरिएको छ । कथा विधालाई प्रारम्भिक तहदेखि नै समावेश गरिएको छ तर उपन्यास विधा माध्यमिक तहको कक्षा ११ र १२ मा समावेश गरी पठनपाठन गर्ने गरिन्छ । कथा र उपन्यास दुवै आख्यान विधालाई भाषा सिकाइमा उपयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । घटनाक्रम मिलान गर्ने, कथाकथन गर्ने, सिप परीक्षण (सुनाइ, बोलाइ, पढाइ र लेखाइ) गर्ने, समीक्षा गर्ने आदि कार्यकलाप गर्ने गराउने र त्यसका आधारमा भाषिक सिकाइ सहजीकरण गर्न प्रक्रिया अबलम्बन गर्न सकिन्छ । एउटा आख्यानात्मक कृतिका लागि कथावस्तु, कथानक, कथा, पात्र तथा चरित्र-चित्रण, विचारतफ्व, परिप्रेक्ष्य, पर्यावरण, प्रतीक र बिम्ब, समय, गति र लय, भाषा : बुनोट र संरचना आदिको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । यी समग्र तफ्वहरूका आधारमा आख्यानको शिक्षण सिकाइ सहजीकरण गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ ।

भाषा शिक्षणमा साहित्यका विधालाई पनि पाठ्यवस्तुभित्र समावेश गरिएको हुन्छ । विद्यालय तहका भाषाका पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरिएका कथा र उपन्यास विधाको उपयोग गरी भाषाका चारवटै सिप सिकाइ सहजीकरण गरिन्छ त्यसै आधारमा आख्यान विधालाई भाषिक सिकाइमा पनि उपयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । भाषिक सिप, विषयवस्तुको ज्ञान, शब्दभण्डार क्षमताको विकास, भाषातफ्वसम्बन्धी क्षमताको विकास र आलोचनात्मक चिन्तनको विकास गर्न आख्यान विधाको उपयोग गरी भाषा सिकाइ गरिन्छ । आख्यान विधा मूलतः श्रव्य पाठ्य विधा हो । यसमा घटनालाई काल्पनिक चरित्रका माध्यमबाट अभिव्यक्त गरिन्छ (भण्डारी र अन्य, २०६७, पृ.१६) । आख्यान गद्य विधा भएकाले विद्यार्थीहरुलाई पठनबोध, कथाकथन आदि कार्यकलाप गराउन पनि यसको शिक्षण गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । माध्यमिक तहमा अध्ययनरत बालबालिकाहरुले आख्यान विधामा प्रयोग भएका घटना र पात्रहरुका बारेमा जिज्ञासा राख्दछन् । आख्यानमा यसपछि के होला ? कुन पात्रले के कस्तो जीवन भोगाइ भोगेको छ ? यसले कौतुहलता सिर्जना गरेको हुन्छ । आख्यान विधाका माध्यमबाट पाठको सस्वरवाचन गर्न लगाउने, शुद्ध उच्चारणको अभ्यास गराउने कठिन शब्दहरुको अर्थ खोजी गरी शब्दार्थ पत्ता लगाउने, प्रश्नोत्तर, घटनाक्रम मिलाउने, बुदा टिपोट र सारांश लेखन तथा कथाकथन र कथालेखनमा अभ्यास गराउनका लागि शिक्षक र विद्यार्थीहरुले कक्षाकोठामा के कस्ता अभ्यास अवलम्बन गरेका छन् भन्ने सन्दर्भमा आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइ सहजीकरणसम्बन्धी अध्ययन वाञ्छनीय देखिन्छ ।

अध्ययनको उद्देश्य

प्रस्तुत अध्ययन *आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको स्वरूप* शीर्षकको मूल समस्यामा केन्द्रित छ । आख्यानात्मक विधाको परिचय, यसको सिकाइ पक्ष आदि विषय अनुसन्धेय विषयका रूपमा राखेर यसको

निक्र्योल गर्न सकिन्छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूपको वर्णन गर्नु यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य रहेको छ ।

अध्ययन विधि

यस अध्ययनमा पुस्तकालयीय कार्य र काठमाडौँ जिल्लाका माध्यमिक तह कक्षा नौदेखि बाह्रसम्म नेपाली भाषा शिक्षण गर्ने तीनजना शिक्षक सहभागीसँगको खुला अन्तर्वार्ताबाट तथ्य सङ्कलन गरिएको छ । प्राप्त तथ्यहरूलाई अध्ययन गरी तिनका मुख्य आशय तथा थिमलाई संक्षेपमा वर्णन गरिएको छ । वर्णनात्मक र व्याख्यात्मक विधिको उपयोग गरिएको यस अध्ययनमा गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान ढाँचाको प्रयोग गरिएको छ ।

अध्ययनको औचित्य

आख्यान विधालाई माध्यमिक तहमा पहिलो विधाका रुपमा अध्यापन गरिन्छ । आख्यान विधाका पाठहरू अन्य विधाका पाठहरुका तुलनामा धेरै छन् । हुनत कथा भन्ने र सुन्ने परम्परा हाम्रो समाजमा धेरै पुरानो छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा विद्यालय तहदेखि विश्वविद्यालय तहको पाठ्यक्रममा पहिलो प्राथमिकतामा समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । यस सम्बन्धमा कक्षाकोठा अवलोकन, शिक्षकका आख्यानात्मक विधा बारेका धारणाको सङ्कलन र सम्बन्धित सैद्धान्तिक दस्तावेजहरूको अध्ययन विश्लेषण गर्नु सान्दर्भिक र औचित्यपूर्ण देखिन्छ ।

व्याख्या तथा छलफल

आख्यानात्मक विधाको परिचय : आख्यानात्मक विधा गद्यमा रचना भएको कथात्मक सङ्कथन हो । संस्कृतको 'ख्या' धातुमा 'ल्युट' प्रत्यय र 'आ' उपसर्ग लागेर 'आख्यान' शब्द बनेको हो । व्युत्पत्तिका आधारमा यस शब्दले भन्नु, घोषणा गर्नु, समाचार सुनाउनु आदि अर्थ दिन्छ । आख्यान शब्दले कथा र उपन्यास दुवै विधालाई जनाउँछ । आख्यान शब्दको व्यवहार आधुनिक साहित्यालोचनामा विशेष गरी कथा र उपन्यासको साझा संज्ञाकै रूपमा हुने गरेको भए पनि अङ्ग्रेजीको फिक्सन शब्दको व्युत्पत्तिगत अर्थतिर ध्यान दिँदा आख्यानात्मकता वा फिक्सनालिटी खाली कथा र उपन्यास मात्रको लक्षण नभएर समस्त साहित्यकै लक्षण ठहरिन्छ (नेपाल, सन् २००५, पृ.२२) । प्रज्ञा नेपाली बृहत् शब्दकोशका अनुसार आख्यानात्मक शब्दको अर्थ कथा वा कथानकको शृङ्खला भएको; आख्यानसम्बन्धी भन्ने हुन्छ । आख्यान विधा गद्यमा कथात्मक सङ्कथन हो । यसमा सम्प्रेषण क्षमता निकै प्रभावकारी छ । प्राचीन कालमा यसले श्रोता मात्र पाएको थियो, तर अहिले सचेत पाठक पाएको छ । यस विधामा पाठक वा श्रोताले आफू र आफ्नो जीवनलाई देख्छ (श्रेष्ठ, २०७९, पृ.४) । आख्यान तर्फ खण्डकाव्य, महाकाव्य, नाटक आदि विधामा पनि पाइन्छ । यद्यपि कथा र उपन्यास यी दुई गद्याख्यानलाई प्रमुख मानिन्छ । एउटा आख्यानात्मक कृतिका लागि कथावस्तु, कथानक, कथा, पात्र तथा चरित्र-चित्रण, विचारतर्फ, परिप्रेक्ष्य, पर्यावरण, प्रतीक र बिम्ब, समय, गति र लय, भाषा : बुनोट र संरचना

आदिको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । यी समग्र तत्वहरूका आधारमा आख्यानको शिक्षण सिकाइ सहजीकरण गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । आख्यान विधा मूलतः श्रव्य पाठ्य विधा हो । यसमा घटनालाई काल्पनिक चरित्रका माध्यमबाट अभिव्यक्त गरिन्छ (भण्डारी र अन्य, २०६७, पृ.१६) । साहित्यका विभिन्न विधामध्ये एक लोकप्रिय विधा आख्यानात्मक विधा हो । यसमा कथा र उपन्यास विधाका पाठहरू रहन्छन् । यस विधामा कथानक, पात्र तथा चरित्र-चित्रण, विचारतत्व, परिप्रेक्ष्य, पर्यावरण, प्रतीक र बिम्ब, समय, गति र लय, भाषा : बुनोट र संरचना आदि तत्वहरूको संयोजन तथा सुगठन रहेको हुन्छ । पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरिएका विधागत पाठहरुमध्ये आख्यानात्मक विधाका पाठहरुलाई भाषाका सिपहरूको सिकाइमा समेत केन्द्रित गर्न सकिन्छ ।

आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको परम्परा : आख्यानको परम्परा श्रुति परम्पराबाट विकसित भएको पाइन्छ । आख्यान सिकाइको आद्य परम्परा रहेको छ । वेददेखि लिएर निरन्तर आख्यान गतिशील रहेको छ । प्राचीन ग्रन्थमा कुनै न कुनै रूपमा कथातत्व रहेको हुन्छ । सुरुमा लोकाख्यान र पछि आधुनिक आख्यान परम्पराको विकास भएको हो । प्रत्येक आख्यानमा कहानी हुन्छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा अखण्ड हुन्छ । यसमा आदि, मध्य र अन्त्यको सिलसिला मिलेको हुन्छ । पहिलेका ऋषिमुनिहरूले आफ्ना शिष्यहरुलाई शिक्षा तथा उपदेश दिने बेलामा आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको स्वरुप झल्किन्छ । प्रसिद्ध पौरस्त्य आख्यानकार गुणाढ्यका कथाहरूको पाठकीय प्रभाव तथा शक्तिका सम्बन्धमा उपर्युक्त कुराहरु भनिएका हुन् । कथा जति सुने पनि नअघाउने, कथा सुन्दा सुन्दा खान नै बिर्सेर दुब्लाउने र कथा सुनेर मनभित्रका सबै कल्मसहरू सबै हटी पाप नै नास हुनेजस्ता शक्तिका बारेमा गरिएको चर्चा वास्तवमा बेठिक हो भन्न सकिन्न (श्रेष्ठ, २०७९, पृ.३) । हाम्रो पूर्वीय परम्परामा कथा सुनाएरै पिनास रोग मात्र होइन, ज्वरोसमेत निको पार्ने गरिन्छ (पूर्ववत्) । ग्रिसका कथावाचक इसप (Aesop) ले कथा भनेरै दासत्वबाट मुक्ति पाएका थिए भने कुद्ध जनताहरूबाट राजा पिसिस्ट्रेटसको ज्यान जोगाइदिए । उनको जीवनकाल ई.पू. ६२० देखि ५६० सम्म रहेको पाइन्छ । उनका नीतिकथाहरूमा पशु पात्रहरूद्वारा मानवीय धर्म र त्रुटिहरूलाई औंल्याइएको पाइन्छ । विद्यालयीय शिक्षा परम्परामा पनि आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको स्पष्ट स्वरुप देखिन्छ । नेपालमा वि.सं. २०२८ भन्दा अघि र पछिका पाठ्यक्रमहरूमा आख्यानात्मक विधालाई समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । कक्षा नौ र दशमा हाल कथा विधाका पाठहरू समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । यस्तै कक्षा एघार र बाह्रमा कथा र उपन्यास समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । यसरी आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको परम्परा पूर्ववैदिक परम्परादेखि वर्तमानसम्म निरन्तर चलेको पाइन्छ ।

आख्यानात्मक विधाको पाठ्यक्रममा स्थान : भाषिक सिकाइ सहजीकरण भाषा पाठ्यक्रमका उद्देश्यअनुरूप तय गरिन्छ । भाषा पाठ्यक्रमको उद्देश्य भाषिक सिपसँग रहन्छ । भाषाका चारवटा सिपहरू सुनाइ, बोलाइ, पढाइ र लेखाइमा दक्षता हासिल गर्ने उद्देश्यले भाषा सिकाइ सहजीकरण गरिन्छ । कथा र उपन्यास विधालाई नेपालको विद्यालयदेखि विश्वविद्यालय तहसम्मको पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरिएको छ ।

कथा विधालाई प्रारम्भिक तहदेखि नै समावेश गरिएको छ तर उपन्यास विधा माध्यमिक तहको कक्षा ११ र १२ मा समावेश गरी पठनपाठन गर्ने गरिन्छ । वि.सं. २०२८ भन्दा अघि र पछिका पाठ्यक्रमहरूमा आख्यानात्मक विधालाई समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । कक्षा नौ र दशमा हाल कथा विधाका पाठहरू समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । यस्तै कक्षा एघार र बाह्रमा कथा र उपन्यास समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । माध्यमिक शिक्षा पाठ्यक्रम २०७६ कक्षा ११ र १२ मा पनि आख्यानात्मक विधालाई समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । उक्त पाठ्क्रमले आख्यानात्मक विधाका पाठहरू रुचिपूर्ण हुने भएकाले कथा शिक्षण गर्दा पूर्वपठन, पठन र पठनपश्चात्का चरणमा बाँडी पूर्वानुमान गर्ने, सहकार्यात्मक पठन, छलफल र प्रस्तुतीकरण गर्ने तथा प्रश्न निर्माण गराउने क्रियाकलाप पनि गराउन सुभएको पाइन्छ । वर्तमान पाठ्यक्रममा सामाजिक, मनोवैज्ञानिक र लोककथाका पाठहरू समावेश गरिएका छन् । आख्यानात्मक विधालाई पाठ्यक्रममा पहिलो र महत्वपूर्ण विधाको स्थान प्रदान गरिएको पाइन्छ ।

आख्यानात्मक विधा शिक्षणको प्रयोजन : भाषा शिक्षणमा साहित्यका विधालाई पनि पाठ्यवस्तुभित्र समावेश गरिएको हुन्छ । विद्यालय तहका भाषाका पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरिएका कथा र उपन्यास विधाको उपयोग गरी भाषाका चारवटै सिप सिकाइ सहजीकरण गरिन्छ त्यसै आधारमा आख्यान विधालाई भाषिक सिकाइमा पनि उपयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । भाषिक सिकाइ सहजीकरण भाषा पाठ्यक्रमका उद्देश्यअनुरूप तय गरिन्छ । भाषा पाठ्यक्रमको उद्देश्य भाषिक सिपसँग रहन्छ । भाषाका चारवटा सिपहरू सुनाइ, बोलाइ, पढाइ र लेखाइमा दक्षता हासिल गर्ने उद्देश्यले भाषा सिकाइ सहजीकरण गरिन्छ । भाषिक सिप, विषयवस्तुको ज्ञान, शब्दभण्डार क्षमताको विकास, भाषातत्वसम्बन्धी क्षमताको विकास र आलोचनात्मक चिन्तनको विकास गर्न आख्यान विधाको उपयोग गरी भाषा सिकाइ गरिन्छ । भाषाका पाठ्य पुस्तकमा समावेश गरिएका सबै विधाबाट विषय वस्तुको ज्ञान, भाषिक अनुभव, बोध, शब्द भण्डारको विकास, विभिन्न किसिमका अभिव्यक्तिको रचना क्षमतामा वृद्धि, शुद्धोच्चारण, वर्णविन्यासको शुद्ध प्रयोग, साहित्यप्रति भुकाव, स्वाध्यायन गर्ने बानी, सिर्जनात्मक क्षमताको विकास आदिको अपेक्षा गर्न सकिन्छ (अधिकारी र शर्मा, २०७४, पृ.१०४) । कथा शिक्षणबाट बाल बालिकाहरूको साहित्यप्रति अभिरुचि बढाउन र व्यक्तिको चरित्र निर्माणमा मद्दत पुग्नुका साथै भाषाका चारवटै सिपको विकास गराउन सकिन्छ । कथा शिक्षण गर्दा सस्वर र मौन पढाइ, कठिन शब्द तथा उखान टुक्काहरूको अर्थ र प्रयोग, बोध प्रश्नोत्तर, घटनाक्रम मिलाउने, सारांश कथन, लेखाइ सम्बन्धी अभ्यास, कथा रचना आदि कार्यकलापहरू गराउन सकिन्छ । भाषाका चारवटै सिप सिकाइका अतिरिक्त साहित्यप्रति रुचि जगाउनु र आख्यानात्मक तत्वका आधारमा समीक्षा गराउन समेत आख्यान विधा सिकाइ सहजीकरण गर्नु पर्दछ ।

आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको स्वरूप : आख्यानात्मक विधामा कथनात्मक शैलीको प्रधानता हुन्छ । लोककथात्मक र आधुनिक दुवै प्रकारका आख्यानहरूमा कथा कथन शैली रहन्छ । एकादेशमा... बाट प्रारम्भ

भएको लोककथा भन्नेलाई फूलको माला आदि लोकशैलीमा प्रस्तुत गरिन्छ र लोकभाषा, अनौपचारिक प्रस्तुतीकरण र लोकशिक्षाको उपयोग भएका लोककथाहरू लोक समाजमा परम्परित सम्पदाका रूपमा रहेका छन् (पराजुली र गिरी, २०८०, पृ.१७२) । आख्यानात्मक विधामा पात्रले नभनी लेखक आफैले केही कुरा भनेको हुन्छ । आख्यान गद्य विधा भएकाले विद्यार्थीहरूलाई पठनबोध, कथाकथन आदि कार्यकलाप गराउन पनि यसको शिक्षण गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । माध्यमिक तहमा अध्ययनरत बालबालिकाहरूले आख्यान विधामा प्रयोग भएका घटना र पात्रहरूका बारेमा जिज्ञासा राख्दछन् । आख्यानमा यसपछि के होला ? कुन पात्रले के कस्तो जीवन भोगाइ भोगेको छ ? यसले कौतुहलता सिर्जना गरेको हुन्छ । आख्यान विधाका माध्यमबाट पाठको सस्वरवाचन गर्न लगाउने, शुद्ध उच्चारणको अभ्यास गराउने कठिन शब्दहरुको अर्थ खोजी गरी शब्दार्थ पत्ता लगाउने, प्रश्नोत्तर, घटनाक्रम मिलाउने, बुदा टिपोट र सारांश लेखन तथा कथाकथन र कथालेखनमा अभ्यास गराउनका लागि शिक्षक र विद्यार्थीहरुले कक्षाकोठामा के कस्ता अभ्यास अवलम्बन गरेका छन् भन्ने सन्दर्भमा आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइ सहजीकरणसम्बन्धी अध्ययन वाञ्छनीय देखिन्छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइमा व्याख्यान, छलफल, प्रश्नोत्तर, प्रस्तुतीकरण, पठनबोध र अभिनय विधिको प्रयोग गरिएको पाइन्छ । बहुबौद्धिकता, आलोचनात्मक सोच, सहकार्यात्मक सिकाइजस्ता प्रक्रियाहरू पनि कक्षाकोठामा उपयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । यसरी आख्यानात्मक विधा लोकपरम्पराको श्रुतिपरम्पराबाट विकास भई वर्तमान समयमा लेख्य, पाठ्य तथा प्रविधिको विकाससँगै श्रव्य, श्रव्यदृश्य स्वरूपमा समेत विकसित भएको पाइन्छ । पहिले बुढापाका मानिसहरूले मनोरञ्जन र उपदेश दिन पिँढीमा बसेर केटाकेटी तथा अन्य मानिसलाई भन्ने र ती सबैले सुन्ने परम्पराबाट आज अनलाइन, रेडियो, टेलिभिजनमा समेत समावेश भएका पाइन्छन् ।

भाषा सिकाइ र आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको सम्बन्ध : भाषा सिकाइ र भाषिक विधा सिकाइलाई अन्योन्याश्रित मानिन्छ । भाषा सिकाइमा भाषिक सिपहरू सुनाइ, बोलाइ, पढाइ र लेखाइमा सिकारूलाई सक्षम बनाउने काम गरिन्छ । विधागत पाठहरूलाई विषयवस्तु तथा माध्यमका रुपमा भाषा सिकाइमा उपयोग गरिन्छ । यस सन्दर्भमा सहभागीको अनुभव यस्तो रहेको छ : *मूलतः आख्यानात्म विधा माध्यमिक तहको पाठ्यक्रममा राखिसकेको हुनाले यसलाई माध्यमका रुपमा उपयोग गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । पहिलेको समयमा कुनै मानिसले लोककथालाई भनिराखेको हुन्थ्यो र अरुले सुन्ने गर्थे, जुन वक्ता र श्रोता वा कथावाचक र श्रवणकर्ता हुने परम्पराबाट विकसित हुँदै गएको अवस्था हो । वर्तमान समयमा आख्यान विधाका माध्यमबाट सिकारुलाई भाषा सिकाइका कुराहरु सिकाउन सजिलो हुन्छ । जस्तै : कथामा रहेको कुन पात्रको माध्यमबाट के उद्देश्य पूरा गर्न खोजिएको छ ? दृष्टिविन्दु के छ ? छ भनेर बुझाइदिने र भाषा सिकाइका सुनाइ, बोलाइ, पढाइ र लेखाइ सिपहरुमा अभ्यास गराउन सकिन्छ । विधालाई हामीले सिकाइको माध्यम वा साधनका रुपमा लिएर अभ्यास गराउन सक्छौँ । अर्को कुरा चाहिँ विधामा भएका तप्टवहरुका आधारमा विभिन्न मौखिक वर्णन, लिखित वर्णन तथा समीक्षाजस्ता उच्च स्तरका कार्य पनि गराउन सकिन्छ (स्थलगत अध्ययन, २०८२)।*

कथा र उपन्यास शिक्षणका कार्यकलापहरूलाई पूर्व शिक्षण, शिक्षण र उत्तर शिक्षण गरी तीन चरणमा शिक्षण गर्न सकिन्छ । लेखकीय शैलीको परिचय, कृति लेखनको सामाजिक, साँस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि, पाठ निष्कर्षको अनुमान, लेखक र पाठका बारेमा विद्यार्थीका व्यक्तिगत जानकारी, शीर्षकबारे छलफल, विशिष्ट पद पदावलीको चर्चा आदि गराई पाठप्रति रुचि जागरण गर्ने कार्य पाठ शिक्षणपूर्व गराउनु उपयुक्त हुन्छ । पाठ शिक्षणका क्रममा कथा वा उपन्यासको मुख्य आशय, आख्यान तत्व, परिवेश आदिको व्याख्या, छलफल, प्रश्नोत्तर, तुलना आदि गराउन सकिन्छ । उत्तर शिक्षण कार्यकलाप अन्तर्गत पाठमा भएका अभ्यासहरुका साथै सिपपरक कार्यकलापहरु गराउन सकिन्छ (घिमिरे,२०७७, ८९/९०) । यसप्रकार भाषिक सिप र समीक्षत्मक कार्यहरु गराई आख्यानात्मक विधा शिक्षण गर्न सकिने भएकाले भाषा सिकाइका उद्देश्य पूरा गर्न आख्यानात्मक विधाको सिकाइ सहजीकरण सहयोगी हुने तथ्य उजागर भएको छ ।

आख्यानात्मक विधा शिक्षणको औचित्य : सिकारूकेन्द्रित सिकाइ सहजीकरण, रूचिपूर्ण शिक्षण र सिकारूको सहभागीतामा बृद्धि गरी उच्च सिकाइ उपलब्धि हासिल गर्न आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइको महत्व सर्वोपरि रहेको छ । माध्यमिक तहमा आख्यान विधाका पाठहरूलाई विधाको क्षेत्र र क्रमअन्तर्गत समावेश गरिएको छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइ सहजीकरण सरल हुनुका साथै विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि रूचिप्रद पनि छ । यसले सिकाइ दिगो बनाउन मद्दत गर्दछ । सिकाइलाई मूलतः चित्रमय र कथात्मक तरिकाले दिगो बनाउन सकिन्छ । कथात्मक तरिकाले भनिएको कुरा चाँडो सम्झिन्छ । अतः यो विधा लोकप्रिय छ । यसबाट उपदेश पनि दिन सकिन्छ । बाल्यकालमा प्रत्येक मानिसले कथा तथा आख्यानहरू सुनेर मनोरञ्जन लिने तथा शिक्षा प्राप्त गरेका अनुभव छँदै छन् । कक्षामा पनि बालबालिकाले नेपाली भाषा सिकाइमा कथा तथा अन्य आख्यानमा जोड दिने गरेको पाइन्छ । शिक्षक शिक्षिकाबाट कथा सुन्न रुचि गर्ने र यो क्रम साथीहरूबाट पनि सुन्ने, आफूले सुनाउने गरेको पाइन्छ । यसर्थ आख्यानात्मक विधामा सिकाइका लागि चाहिने उत्सुकता, कुतुहलता, रुचिपूर्णताले भरिपूर्ण आन्तरिक उत्प्रेरणा समेत रहेको पाइन्छ । अन्य विषयका तुलनामा आख्यान सिकाइमा विद्यार्थी सहभागीता पाइन्छ । यस सन्दर्भमा सहभागीको दृष्टिकोण यस प्रकार छ :

साहित्यका विभिन्न विधाहरूमध्ये आख्यानात्मक विधाका माध्यमबाट सहज तरिकाले विद्यार्थीको बुझाइको विकास गर्न सकिन्छ । कविता र निबन्ध विधाको भन्दा कथा र उपन्यासका माध्यमबाट सहज तरिकाले बुझेको मैले पाएको छु । यसमा पनि विद्यार्थीलाई आख्यानभित्रको पात्र वा चरित्रका रूपमा उभ्याएर भूमिका निर्वाह गर्न लगाउन सकेमा त्यो पनि प्रभावकारी हुने देखिन्छ । यसबाट विषयवस्तु र भाषाशैली बुझ्न पनि सहज हुन्छ । यसमा विद्यार्थी आफैले आफ्नो भूमिका निर्वाह गर्ने हुँदा पढाइ, लेखाइतथा अन्य राम्रा नराम्रा पक्षको समेत सहज तरिकाले केलाउन सक्ने देखिन्छ (स्थलगत अध्ययन, २०८२) ।

साहित्यका विधा सिकाइको मुख्य उद्देश्य पनि सिकाइप्रति रुचि जागृत गराई भाषाका चारवटै सिप सिकाइतर्फ उत्प्रेरित गराउनु नै हो । वर्तमान माध्यमिक शिक्षा पाठ्यक्रमले पनि यस पक्षमा जोड दिएको पाइन्छ । विद्यार्थी स्वयम्ले गरेर सिक्ने, रुचिपूर्वक सिक्ने, सक्रिय सहभागी हुने, सिकाइमा दिगोपन देखिने भएकाले यसको सिकाइ उपलब्धि पनि राम्रो देखिने हुन्छ, अत: आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइ भरपर्दो, विद्यार्थीको रुचिलाई समेत समेटेको विधा सिकाइका रूपमा पाइन्छ ।

प्राप्ति

आख्यानात्मक विधा साहित्यको प्राचीन तथा लोकप्रिय विधाका रुपमा स्थापित रहेको पाइन्छ । यस विधाअन्तर्गत कथा र उपन्यास विधा रहेका छन् । यो गद्यमा तयार पारिएको कथात्मक सङ्कथन हो । यसमा सम्प्रेषण क्षमता निकै प्रभावकारी छ । प्राचीन कालमा आश्रममा ऋषिमुनिहरूले आफ्ना शिष्यलाई कथात्मक शैलीमा उपदेश दिने परम्परा रहेको पाइन्छ । यो श्रव्य विधाका रुपमा परिचित छ । आधुनिक शिक्षा प्रणालीमा कथा तथा उपन्यासलाई पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरी विद्यालय तथा विश्वविद्यालयका कक्षाहरूमा पठनपाठन भइरहेको पाइन्छ । विधागत पाठहरूलाई विषयवस्तु तथा माध्यमका रुपमा भाषा सिकाइमा उपयोग गरिन्छ । पाठ्यक्रममा पनि आख्यानात्मक विधालाई समावेश गरी कक्षाकोठाको सिकाइ सहजीकरणमा विभिन्न कार्यकलापहरू गराउने परम्परा रहेको पाइन्छ । विद्यार्थी सक्रियता, रुचिपूर्णता तथा विधागत लोकप्रियता यस विधा सिकाइका विशेषताका रुपमा रहेका छन् । यस विधाको सिकाइ भाषाका चारवटै सिप सिकाइमा उपयोगी रहेको पाइन्छ । कथा कथन, मौखिक वर्णन, चरित्रचित्रण तथा नाटकीकरण आदि कार्यकलापमा विद्यार्थीहरू सक्रिय हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । यस विधा सिकाइका माध्यमबाट विद्यार्थी स्वयम्लाई समेत स्वतन्त्र र रुचिपूर्ण सिकाइ गर्न मद्दत पुग्ने तथ्य उजागर भएको छ । वर्तमान समयमा पाठ्य, श्रव्य र श्रव्यदृश्य स्वरुपमा यो विधा विकसित भएको पाइन्छ । प्रविधिसँग जोडेर यसको सिकाइ समेत हुने गरेको पाइन्छ ।

निष्कर्ष

आख्यानात्मक विधाको विकास श्रुतिपरम्पराबाट भएको पाइन्छ । यसलाई लोकप्रिय विधा मानिन्छ । आख्यानात्मक विधाअन्तर्गत कथा र उपन्यास पर्दछन् । अङ्ग्रेजीको फिक्सन शब्दद्वारा यसलाई चिनाइन्छ । लोककथाहरूबाट कथा सिकाइको अनौपचारिक परम्परा सुरु भएको पाइन्छ । संस्कृत साहित्यमा प्रसिद्ध आख्यानकार गुणाढ्यका कथाहरू चर्चित छन् भने ग्रिसका कथावाचक इसप (Aesop) का कथाहरू पाश्चात्य साहित्यका चर्चित कथाहरू मानिन्छन् । पूर्वीय र पाश्चात्य परम्पराबाट विकसित आख्यानात्मक पाठहरुको सिकाइमा महत्त्वपूर्ण योगदान रहेको छ । एउटा आख्यानात्मक रचनाका लागि कथावस्तु, कथानक, कथा, पात्र तथा चरित्र-चित्रण, विचारतत्त्व, परिप्रेक्ष्य, पर्यावरण, प्रतीक र बिम्ब, समय, गति र लय, भाषा : बुनोट र संरचना आदिको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । पाठ्यक्रममा पनि यस विधालाई समावेश गरी कक्षाकोठाको

सिकाइ सहजीकरणमा विभिन्न कार्यकलापहरू गराउने परम्परा रहेको पाइन्छ । विद्यार्थी सक्रियता, रुचिपूर्णता तथा विधागत लोकप्रियता यस विधा सिकाइका विशेषताका रुपमा रहेका छन् । यस विधाको सिकाइ भाषाका चारवटै सिप सिकाइमा उपयोगी रहेको पाइन्छ । कथा कथन, मौखिक वर्णन, चरित्रचित्रण तथा नाटकीकरण आदि कार्यकलापमा विद्यार्थीहरू सक्रिय हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । यस विधा सिकाइका माध्यमबाट विद्यार्थी स्वयम्लाई समेत स्वतन्त्र र रुचिपूर्ण सिकाइ गर्न मद्दत पुग्ने तथ्य उजागर भएको छ । आख्यानात्मक विधा सिकाइका माध्यमबाट सिकारूको भाषा सिकाइ दिगो बनाउन मद्दत गर्दछ । कथात्मक तरिकाले भनिएको कुरा चाँडो सम्झना हुने तथा सिकारूले सिकाइमा झन्झट नमान्ने प्रवृत्तिको विकास हुन्छ ।

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स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचना

कृष्णराज पुजारा

उपप्राध्यापक

सोलुखुम्बु बहुमुखी क्याम्पस

लेखसार

प्रस्तुत लेखमा स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यास गोल्डमानले उत्पत्तिमूलक संरचनावादको मूल सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूपभित्र विश्वदृष्टि अर्थात् सामाजिक संरचनालाई समाजशास्त्रीय मान्यता प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । साहित्य विश्लेषणका विभिन्न आधारमाहरूमध्ये सामाजिक संरचना पनि एक हो । यस लेखको मुख्य उद्देश्य उपन्यासकार हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानद्वारा रचित स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासलाई सामाजिक संरचनाका आधारमा विश्लेषण गर्नु हो । यो लेखलाई वर्णनात्मक विधिका आधारमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । जसमा प्राथमिक स्रोतका रूपमा स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासलाई मुख्य आधार बनाइएको छ । उक्त उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचानाले हेर्दा उत्कृष्ट नै रहेको पाइन्छ । यस उपन्यासमा रहेका विभिन्न साक्ष्यहरूलाई प्रस्तुत गर्दै ती साक्ष्यबाट सामाजिक संरचनालाई खोजी सामाजिक संरचनाका स्वरूपहरूलाई औल्याउँदै विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । उपन्यासमा के कस्ता सामाजिक संरचनाहरू निर्माण भएको पाइन्छ ? त्यसको खोजी गर्दै अन्तमा निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ । उक्त उपन्यासमा पारिवारिक संरचना, सामुदायिक संरचना, लैङ्गिक संरचना र धार्मिक संरचनाको प्रयोग प्रशस्त मात्रामा रहेको पाइन्छ । यस लेखले सामाजिक संरचना तथा विश्वदृष्टि सम्बन्धी शोधखोज गर्ने पश्चवर्ती शोधकर्ताहरू तथा अनुसन्धानार्थीहरूलाई मदत पुग्ने देखिन्छ ।

विशेष शब्दहरू : उपन्यास, संरचना, सामाजिक संरचना, पारिवारिक, सामुदायिक, लैङ्गिक, धार्मिक

विषय परिचय

हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधान (१९७२-२०१६) नेपाली साहित्यका बहुमुखी प्रतिभा हुन् । उनले निबन्ध, कथा, कविता, उपन्यास, समालोचनाजस्ता विभिन्न विधामा योगदान दिएका छन् । आधुनिक उपन्यासको प्रगतिवादी

तथा यथार्थवादी धारामा देखापरेका प्रधानको *स्वास्नीमान्छे* (२०११) उपन्यास प्रकाशित छ । उनले यस उपन्यासको मुख्य विषयवस्तुको स्रोत समाजलाई नै बनाएको पाइन्छ । *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यास नेपाली समाजमा नारीले भोग्नुपरेको लैङ्गिक तथा वर्गीय विभेदजस्ता विविध सामाजिक समस्यामा केन्द्रित छ । यस उपन्यासमा पारिवारिक बेमेलका कारण शत्रुहरूले त्यसको प्रत्यक्ष फाइदा कसरी लिएका छन् र एउटी स्वास्नीमान्छेको शत्रु कसरी स्वास्नीमान्छे नै हुन्छन् भन्ने विचार पनि एकातिर छ भने अर्कोतिर स्वास्नीमान्छेको पीडा स्वास्नीमान्छेले नै बुझ्न सक्छ भन्ने विचार रहेको पाइन्छ । यस उपन्यासमा नेपाली समाजमा प्रचलित सामाजिक एवम् सांस्कृतिक संरचनाले निर्माण गरेका पारिवारिक, सामुदायिक, लैङ्गिक, धार्मिक आदि सामाजिक संरचना छन् । यिनै सामाजिक संरचनाको आधारमा उक्त उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचानको खोजी गरेर त्यही सैद्धान्तिक आधारमा उपन्यासको विश्लेषण गर्ने कार्य यस अध्ययनमा भएको छ ।

विभिन्न अध्येताहरूले *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासलाई विभिन्न ढङ्गबाट प्रधानका उपन्यासको अध्ययन गरे तापनि विश्वदृष्टिको बारेमा अर्थात सामाजिक संरचनाका आधारमा कोही कसैले छुट्टै अध्ययन गरेको पाइँदैन । प्रधानका उपन्यासमा विश्वदृष्टिको अध्ययन नभएको हुँदा प्रस्तुत अध्ययन कार्यमा विश्वदृष्टि तथा सामाजिकक संचनका आधारमा अध्ययन गरिएको छ । यो कृति यस अध्ययन कार्यका निम्ति सैद्धान्तिक र प्रायोज्ञिक दृष्टिले उपयोगी भए पनि गोल्डमानको विश्वदृष्टिले स्थापित गरेका सामाजिक संरचना र वर्गीय विश्वदृष्टिको पक्षबाट हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानका उपन्यासहरूको अध्ययन कार्य भएको देखिदैन । यसर्थ समाजशास्त्रीय अध्ययनअन्तर्गत विश्वदृष्टिका कोणबाट प्रधानका उपन्यासहरूको शोध गर्नु आवश्यक देखिएको छ । गोल्डमानले उत्पत्तिमूलक संरचनावादको मूल सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूपभित्र विश्वदृष्टि अर्थात् सामाजिक संरचना सम्बन्धी समाजशास्त्रीय मान्यता प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । यो सामाजिक संरचना एक परिवर्तित अवधारणा हो । यसमा पारिवारिक, धार्मिक, आर्थिक, समुदायगत, शैक्षिक, वैवाहिक नातासम्बन्ध, विभिन्न जाति, प्रजातिलगायतका पक्षहरूको एकीकृत पद्धतिलाई सामाजिक संरचनामा समेटिन्छ । यो परिवार, समुदाय, वर्ग, जाति, भाषा, संस्कृतिबिचको अन्तरसम्बन्धका साथै विभिन्न पेसा, व्यवसायमा संलग्न समग्र मानिसको जीवनपद्धतिसँग आबद्ध भएको हुन्छ । यस कारण समुदायको सामूहिक विचार नै विश्वदृष्टि हो, जसले समाजको सुसङ्गत चेतनाको निर्माण र विकास गर्छ । यसरी विकसित विश्वदृष्टिले सामाजिक संरचना र त्यस समाजको गतिशील अवधारणालाई सङ्केत गरेको हुन्छ । प्रस्तुत लेखमा हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानको *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचनाको विविधता र तिनको उपन्यासगत प्रस्तुतिको अध्ययन गरिएको छ । विशेषत: सामाजिक संरचनाको सैद्धान्तिक आधार निरूपण गरी *स्वास्नीमान्छे* (२०११) उपन्यासको पारिवारिक, सामुदायिक, लैङ्गिक, धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचनाका आधारमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

समस्याकथन र उद्देश्य

प्रस्तुत *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यसमा सामाजिक संरचनाको खोजी गर्नु यस लेखको मुख्य समस्या हो । उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचना के कस्ता छन् भन्ने जिज्ञासालाई अध्ययनको मूल समास्याकथनका रूपमा लिइएको छ । यस मूल समस्याको समाधानका लागि प्रस्तुत उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचना खोजी गरी विश्लेषण गर्नु नै यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य रहेको छ ।

अध्ययन विधि

प्रस्तुत अनुसन्धानात्मक लेखका लागि विश्लेषण विधिको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । विश्लेषण सामग्रीका रूपमा हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानको *स्वास्नी मान्छे* (२०११) उपन्यासलाई प्राथमिक सामग्रीको रूपमा राखिएको छ । लेखमा लुसिएँ गोल्डमानले स्थापित गरेका सामाजिक संरचनाको स्वरूप सैद्धान्तिक आधार मानेर तिनले स्थापित गरेका पारिवारिक, सामुदायिक, लैङ्गिक र धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचनाका आधारमा हृदयचन्दसिंह प्रधानको *स्वास्वनीमान्छे* उपन्यासको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । उपन्यासको सूक्ष्म पठन गरी साक्ष्यको छनोट गरिएको छ । तिनै साक्ष्यका आधारमा उपन्यासमा निहित सामाजिक संरचनालाई खोजेर त्यसलाई पाठात्मक विधिबाट व्याख्या र विश्लेषण गरी निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ ।

सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूप

गोल्डमानका अनुसार व्यक्तिले समाजका घटना तथा तथ्यहरूबाट प्रभावित हुँदै आनुवंशिक रूपमा कतिपय कुराहरू ग्रहण गर्दै आफ्नो विशिष्ट संरचना बनाउँछ । यसको विकास र निर्माणको प्रक्रिया निरन्तर चलिरहन्छ । संरचनाको स्वरूप समाजका विभिन्न घटनाहरू तथा व्यक्तिका दैनिक व्यवहारबाट प्रभावित हुँदै निरन्तर परिवर्तन भइरहन्छ (गोल्डमान, सन् १९८०, पृ. १६) । कुनै पनि सामाजिक समूहको क्रियाकलाप उनीहरूको चेतनाअनुरूप सञ्चालित हुन्छ । समूहका यस प्रकारका गतिविधिले नयाँ सामाजिक संरचनाको जन्म दिन्छन् । एउटै रहनसहन, व्यवस्था, धर्म अँगालेर एकै स्थानमा बसोबास गर्ने मानिसहरूको समूहलाई समाज भनिन्छ । कुनै पनि व्यक्ति, संस्था, समूह लगायतका अनेकौँ तह र पक्षका बीचको आपसी सम्बन्ध, व्यवहार र अन्तरक्रिया नै समाज हो । समाजका आवश्यकीय पक्षहरूका रूपमा मानिस-मानिसबीचको पारस्परिक सहयोग, सम्बन्ध, अन्तरक्रिया, चालचलन, सामाजिक मूल्यमान्यता आदिलाई लिइन्छ । संरचनालाई अर्थ्याउने क्रममा गोल्डमानले संरचनालाई विशिष्ट मानेका छन् । मानिसको सामाजिक संरचनाको विकास आनुवंशिक रूपमा मात्र हुँदैन यो समाजबाट प्रभावित भएर मात्र हुन्छ ।

समाज व्यक्तिहरूको अन्तरनिर्भरतामा आधारित एउटा गतिशील अवधारणा हो जहाँ समाजका एकाइहरूबीच सहयोग, सद्भाव र सङ्घर्ष हुन्छ । सामाजिक संरचना विभिन्न सामाजिक एकाइहरूबीचको अन्तरसम्बन्धमा आधारित निरन्तर चलिरहने प्रक्रिया हो जसभित्र रहेका सामाजिक तत्त्व वा एकाइका पक्षहरूबीच अन्तरसम्बन्ध हुन्छ । यस प्रक्रियामा द्वन्द्व र अन्तर्विरोध पनि हुन्छ । यसबाट सामाजिक परिवर्तनको सम्भावना पनि रहन्छ तर एउटा संरचना अस्थायीभन्दा पनि स्थायी प्रकृतिको बढी हुन्छ । सामाजिक एकाइहरूमा परिवर्तन जति स्वाभाविक रूपले हुन्छ त्यसको मूल संरचना पनि न्यून दरले परिवर्तन हुन्छ । सामाजिक एकाइमा परिवर्तन हुँदा सामाजिक संरचनामा पनि परिवर्तन हुन्छ । तुलनात्मक रूपमा सामाजिक संरचना स्थिर अवधारणा हो (आचार्य, २०६९, पृ. ४७) । समयानुसार सामाजिक संरचना परिवर्तनशील हुन्छ ।

भौतिक जगत्‌को उच्चतम अवस्था समाज हो अथवा मानव क्रियाकलापको ऐतिहासिक विकासमान अवस्था नै समाज हो । समाजको केन्द्रका रूपमा मान्छे रहेको हुन्छ । मान्छे र समाजका बीच विषय र विषयीको सम्बन्ध रहेको हुन्छ । समाजमा मान्छेले विभिन्न सम्बन्धहरू विकसित गर्दछन् । यिनै अन्तर्सम्बन्धहरूको समष्टि नै समाज हो । समाज भनेको मानिसहरूको माझमा चलिरहने पारस्परिक अन्तर्क्रियाहरूको एउटा अवस्था हो । मानव समाज एउटा विशाल कार्यशाला हो, जहाँ मानिसहरू कुनै न कुनै काममा लागेका हुन्छन् । यही कामको प्रक्रियामा उनीहरूका माझमा भौतिक सम्बन्ध कायम हुन्छ । सामाजिक संरचनाका आधारहरूमा पारिवारिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, सांस्कृतिक तथा भौतिक विषयहरू पर्दछन् । यसरी एउटा रहनसहन धर्म अँगाल्ने, एकै स्थानमा बसोबास गर्ने मानिसहरूको समूहलाई समाज भनिन्छ । यस्तो समाजमा व्यक्तिका इच्छा, आकांक्षा पनि समय, परिस्थितिअनुसार प्रभावित हुँदै निरन्तर परिवर्तन हुँदै जान्छन् । यसरी समाजमा बस्ने व्यक्तिहरूका इच्छा र आकांक्षाहरू परस्पर सम्बद्ध हुँदा एउटा विचारको जन्म हुन्छ । यस्तो विचार समयक्रमसँगै परिवर्तन हुँदै जान्छ । यसरी समाजको विशिष्ट संरचना स्थिर नभई गतिशील हुन्छ । यसको विकास र निर्माणको प्रक्रिया निरन्तर चलिरहन्छ । समाजको सामाजिक संरचनालाई चर्चा गर्ने सन्दर्भमा मार्क्स, लुइविगरिख एङ्गेल्स जस्ता समाजवादीहरूको सम्पर्कले गर्दा महान् दार्शनिक बन्न पुगे । विभिन्न लेखहरूमार्फत मार्क्सले पुँजीवाद तथा अन्य वर्गीय र शोषणमूलक समाजको विरोध गरे (श्रेष्ठ, २०६०, पृ. ७) । श्रेष्ठका अनुसार सामाजिक संरचनाका पारिवारिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, सांस्कृतिक, ऐतिहासिक जस्ता संरचना रहन्छन् भन्ने विचार ठहर्छ ।

इसाको १९ औँ शताब्दीमा सुरु भएको साहित्यको समाजशास्त्रीय चिन्तनलाई बिसौँ शताब्दीमा व्यवस्थित रूपमा विकास गर्ने काम गोल्डमानबाट नै भएको हो । उनले दर्शन, मनोविज्ञान र समाजशास्त्र मात्र होइन यो संस्कृतिका विभिन्न रूपमा ऐतिहासिक, सामाजिक विशिष्टताको विश्लेषण गर्ने पद्धति पनि हो भनेकाछन् । लुसिएँ गोल्डमान सुरुमा मार्क्सवादी चिन्तक रहेका र पछि मार्क्सवादी चिन्तनका कमीकमजोरीमाथि आलोचना गर्दै नवमार्क्सवादी समाजशास्त्रीय चिन्तक बन्न पुगेका हुन् । गोल्डमानले मार्क्सवादको केन्द्रीय

मान्यता ठानिएको सामाजिक परिवर्तनमा आर्थिक आधारको प्रमुख भूमिका रहने कुराप्रति आपत्ति प्रकट गरेका छन् । यसरी उनले मार्क्सवादबाट प्रभावित भएर मार्क्सवादको वर्गसङ्घर्ष र वर्गचेतनासम्बन्धी चिन्तनलाई समाजशास्त्रीय स्वरूप दिने काम गरेका छन् (पाण्डेय, २०७३, पृ. १८) । उनले समाजशास्त्रीय चिन्तनको मूल मान्यता उत्पत्तिमूलक संरचनावाद हो भन्ने मान्यता राखेका छन् । यही सिद्धान्तभित्र उनले कृति विश्लेषणका लागि विभिन्न दृष्टिकोणको विकास गरेका छन् ।

गोल्डमानले सामाजिक संरचनावादको आधारलाई लिएर साहित्य र समाजको सम्बन्धलाई उपाद्य र उत्पादकका रूपमा व्याख्या गरेका छन् । उनले मार्क्सवादी द्वन्द्वात्मकता एवम् वर्गीय दृष्टिकोण, युगको सामूहिक अवचेतन र साहित्यको संरचना प्रक्रियालाई जोडेर उत्पत्तिमूलक संरचनावादको विकास गरेका छन् । लेखकको विचार र समाजको विचारबाट औसत विचारको जन्म हुने धारणा राख्दै उनले त्यसलाई विश्वदृष्टिको रूपमा परिभाषित गरेका छन् (क्षेत्री, २०६४, पृ. २७) । यसरी गोल्डमानले सामाजिक संरचनाकै सन्दर्भमा विश्वदृष्टिलाई जोड्ने काम गरेका छन् । यसको विकास कुनै समूह वा वर्गले सामाजिक ऐतिहासिक प्रक्रियामा गर्छ । एक्लो व्यक्तिको विचार सुसङ्गत र एकत्वपूर्ण हुँदैन वा विरलै हुन्छ । समाजमा विभिन्न सोचविचार लिएका समूहका मानिसहरू बसोबास गर्ने हुनाले एउटा परिवेशको मानिसले अर्को मानिससँग सम्बन्ध बनाउँछ र अन्तरक्रिया गर्छ । विभिन्न पेसा, वर्गका एक समुदायका मानिसले अर्को समूहको चेतनामा प्रभाव पार्दछ जसबाट एउटा अनौठो संरचनाको निर्माण हुन्छ । यसरी एउटै परिवेशका एउटै खालका मानिसहरूको समूहले एउटा समान विचारको निर्माण गर्दछन् ।

सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक व्यवस्था एवं संरचना भनेको धार्मिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, पारिवारिक, शैक्षिक, वैवाहिक, नातासम्बन्ध, जाति, प्रजाति, संस्कृति, वातावरण, अन्तरक्रिया आदि थुप्रै संस्था र प्रक्रिया मिलेर बनेको एकीकृत प्रणाली हो । नेपाली समाजको संरचनाले विभिन्न जाति, भाषा, संस्कृति, पेसा, व्यवसाय आदिमा संलग्न नेपालीहरूको समग्रजीवन प्रणालीलाई बुझाउँछ । यसले उनीहरूले विकास गरेका सामाजिक सङ्गठन, संस्था र समूहहरूको प्रकार्यात्मक स्वरूपलाई जनाउँछ । यसले विभिन्न जातिका मानिसहरूले समयका अन्तरालमा विकास गरेको अर्थ प्रणालीबीचको सम्बन्धलाई जनाउँछ । यसरी हेर्दा नेपाली समाज र संस्कृतिभित्र रहेका जेजति अन्तर्विरोधहरू छन् यी सबैको समुच्चय स्वरूप नै नेपाली समाजको संरचना हो (आचार्य, २०६९, पृ. ४६) । अतः विभिन्न जाति, भाषा, संस्कृति, पेसा व्यवसायले नै नेपाली समाजको संरचना निर्माण भएको पाइन्छ ।

गोल्डमान लगायत गोल्डमानको सिद्धान्तलाई आधार मानेर अध्ययन अनुसन्धान गर्ने विभिन्न विद्वानकाअनुसार समाजका विभिन्न घटनाहरूबाट नै समाजको विकास हुन्छ । सामाजिक संरचनाले मानसिक संरचनाको निर्माण गर्छ र मानसिक संरचना निर्माणमा सामाजिक संरचनाको भूमिका महत्त्वपूर्ण रहेको हुन्छ ।

सामाजिक संरचनाभित्र पारिवारिक, समुदायिक, वैवाहिक, धार्मिक, वर्गीय, लैङ्गिक, जातीय, भाषिक, धार्मिक तथा सांस्कृतिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक, साहित्यिक आदि जस्ता विषयवस्तुहरूलाई समेट्न सकिन्छ । यी विषय र तिनीहरूको आपसी सम्बन्ध तथा अन्तरक्रियाले सामाजिक व्यवस्थाको धरातल निर्माण हुन्छ ।

सामाजिक संरचनाभित्र थुप्रै विषयवस्तु समेटिए तापनि हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानको *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा भएका सामाजिक संरचनाको प्रबलताको आधारमा सामाजिक संरचनाको खोजी गरी त्यसका आधारमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । अतः यिनै विषयवस्तुलाई दृष्टिगत गरी प्रस्तुत अध्यायमा हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानका उपन्यासमा अभिव्यक्त सामाजिक संरचनाको अध्ययन गरिएको छ । विशेषतः प्रधानका उपन्यासमा पारिवारिक, सामुदायिक, लैङ्गिक, धार्मिक जस्ता सामाजिक संरचनाको अध्ययन गरिएको छ ।

स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा पारिवारिक संरचना

स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा विभिन्न खालका पारिवारिक संरचना रहेका छन् । विशेष गरी पारिवारिक संचनाभित्र एकल परिवार र संयुक्त परिवार, परिवारभित्रको नातासम्बन्ध र ती परिवारको आर्थिक अवस्था वा पेसा, व्यवसायलाई हेरिएको छ । प्रमोदको परिवार, हिराज्यानको परिवार, मोहनबहादुरको परिवारलगायत रमानन्द, बाबुलाल, भक्तराज, मैयाँनानी, नानीप्राण, मिस्रीदिदी, भाइचा साल्ली आदि परिवारका रूपमा यहाँ आएका छन् । विशेष गरी प्रमोद, हिराज्यान, मोनबहादुर, मैयाँनानी, नानीप्राण र मिस्रीदिदीको परिवार सशक्त रूपमा रहेका छन् भने अरू गौण रूपमा आएका छन् ।

प्रमोदको परिवारमा मोतीमाया जेठी श्रीमती र कमला कान्छी श्रीमतीका रूपमा उपन्यासमा देखिएका छन् र मोतीमायाको एउटा छोरा विनोद मात्रै रहेको छ । एकल पारिवारिक संरचनामा रहेको प्रमोदको परिवारमा घरको काम गर्ने चम्पा नोकर्नीका रूपमा देखा परेकी छे । प्रमोद नै घरको मुलीका रूपमा रहेको छ । उसले कमलाको सुन्दर यौवन देखेपछि बिस्तारै पतिव्रतामा रहेकी श्रीमती मोतीमायालाई बेवास्ता गर्दछ । उसको बेवास्ता र अनावश्यक कुरा लगाउने कान्छी श्रीमती कमलाको मात्रै कुरा सुन्ने प्रवृत्तिले सुन्दर परिवारलाई पनि तहसनहस पारेको छ । घरमा नोकर्नीसमेत हुँदा आर्थिक रूपमा सम्पन्न परिवार भएपनि प्रमोदले दोस्रो विवाहपछि आफ्नो सुन्दर घरलाई तहसनहस पारेर मोतीमायालाई विचल्लीमा पारेको छ ।

प्रमोदको परिवारभित्रको नातासम्बन्ध हेर्दाखेरि मोतीमाया र विनोदबिच आमा र छोराको रगतको सम्बन्ध रहेको छ भने प्रमोद र मोतीमायाका बिच पतिपत्नीको सम्बन्ध भए तापनि कान्छी श्रीमती कमलासित बिहे गरेपछि त्यो सम्बन्ध व्यावहारिक रूपमा प्रमोदले अगाडि बढाउन सकेको छैन जो परिवारभित्र प्रमोदको कमजोरी पनि रहेको देखिन्छ । कमला र मोतीमायाबिच सौतासौतेनीको सम्बन्ध रहेको छ । विनोद र प्रमोदबिच बुबाछोराको रगतको वंशीय नातासम्बन्ध रहे तापनि परिवारभित्र बुबाछोराको सम्बन्ध मोतीमायाका कारणले

व्यावहारिक रूपमा अगाडि जान निकै कठिनाइहरू आएका छन् । परिवारभित्र मोतीमाया र विनोदको घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध रहेको छ भने अर्कोतिर कमला र प्रमोदका बिच पनि घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध पाउन सकिन्छ । मोतीमाया र विनोदको घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध उपन्यासमा यसरी आएको छ :

अनि बल्ल मोतीमायालाई सान्त्वना भयो । आमाको काखमा बस्दाबस्दै विनोदको मुखमा प्रसन्नताले राम्रै छाउन थाल्यो । साबिकै झैँ उसले मोतीमायाको चिउँडो समातीकन हाँसेर भन्यो, आमा ! अब म बाको कोठामा कहिल्यै पनि जान्नँ है ! तिमी पनि नजाऊ है आमा ! गयो भने बाले फेरि पिट्ला हकि आमा ? (पृ.१४) ।

माथिको उपन्यासांशमा बुबाले आमाछोरालाई माया नगर्ने, छोरालाई पनि हप्काउने, दप्काउने गर्नाले मोतीमायाले बुबाको कोठामा नजाऊ भन्दाभन्दै प्रमोदले विनोदलाई झुपारे-पछि विनोद आमाको काखमा आउँदा मोतीमायालाई बल्ल सान्त्वना हुन्छ । विनोदले पनि अब म बुबाको कोठामा कहिले नजाने, गयो भने बुबाले पिट्ला है आमा भनी आफ्ना मनका वेदना आमासित पोखेको छ । यसले के सन्देश दिएको छ भने छोराछोरीलाई बुबाले भन्दा नि बढी माया आमाले गर्ने गर्दछन् । जो सत्यताको बाटोमा हिँड्छ, जसले धेरै माया गर्छ उसैलाई छोराछोरीले साथ दिन्छन् भन्ने यथार्थ पनि विनोदले पुष्टि गरेको छ । मोतीमाया परपुरुषको घरमा बसे तापनि आफ्नो छोरासँग मोहनबहादुरलाई पटक-पटक भेट गराइ माग्छे । विनोद पनि आफ्नी आमा अर्कैसित पोइल गए तापनि सधैँ भेट्न जान्थ्यो । त्यति मात्रै होइन, कमला र प्रमोदले मोतीमाया मोहनबहादुरसित पोइल गएर त्यताबाट भागेर वेश्यालयमा पुगेको तिम्रो आमा नै खराब हो भनेर भन्दा विनोद रिसले आमालाई मार्छु भनेर खुकुरी बोकेर जान्छ । ऊ जसोतसो वेश्यालय पत्ता लगाउँछ । वेश्यालयमा मैयाँनानीले तिम्रा आमा खराब नभएको तिम्रो बुबा प्रमोद नै खराब भएको भनेर सत्यता सावित गर्छे । पछि वेश्यालयबाट आमालाई घरमा ल्याउन खोज्दा बुबाले घरभित्र नल्याऊ भन्दा पनि त्यसको सामना गर्दै घरभित्र आमालाई भित्र्याउँछ । उक्त प्रसङ्ग उपन्यासमा यसरी आएको छ :

गौरवसाथ विनोदले जवाफ दिए, हो खास हो, "मेरी आमा चौता हुनुहुन्छ, देवी हुनुहुन्छ । मोहनसित मेरी आमा पोइल जानुभएको होइन, बरु तपाईंलाई रन्डी अँगाल्नपरेकाले मेरी आमालाई तपाईंले अनेक निहुँ, बहाना झिकी चुटेर, पिटेर लट्याएर निकाल्नुभो । तपाईंकै सतीत्वमा अझ आमा आत्महत्या गर्न तयार भइसक्नुभएको थियो अनि धूर्त गुन्डा मोहनबहादुरले भेटाइ मानवताको आडमा आफ्नो पन्जा र कब्जामा पारी विवश र बाध्य गरेर आमालाई त्यसले फसाएको हो । त्यसको जवाफदेही तपाईं हुनुहुन्छ । मेरी आमालाई रन्डी नै मान्नुहुन्छ भने रन्डी बनाउने तपाईं नै हुनुहुन्छ " (पृ. १३७) ।

माथिको उपन्यासांशबाट आमा मोतीमायाका विरुद्ध बोलेका प्रमोदका हरेक शब्दको खण्डन अनि मण्डन गर्दै विनोदले आफ्नी आमा पतिव्रता नारी भएकी र उनलाई वेश्या बन्न बाध्य पार्ने तपाईं हो जबर्जस्ती

सतीलाई रन्डी बनाउने तपाईको मुख्य भूमिका छ भनेको छ । मेरी आमालाई मात्र होइन, समाजको सुरक्षा गरी समाजलाई फलाउने, हुर्काउने नारी जातिलाई अपमान, अवहेलना गरी नेपाललाई समेत बरबाद गरिरहनुभएको छ, राष्ट्रमा कलङ्क लगाइरहनु भएको छ, राष्ट्रनायिका नारी जातिको जीवन र व्यक्तित्व नष्ट गरेर तपाई जस्तो गुन्डाले यो संसारलाई धमिल्याइरहनुभएको छ भनेर विनोद आफ्नी आमाको पक्षमा बुबाका विरुद्ध सशक्त रूपमा कडा जवाफ दिएर आमाको न्यायका लागि बुबासँग द्वन्द्व गर्नसमेत पछि पर्दैन । विनोदले यसो गर्नु भनेको विनोदको बुबासित भन्दा पनि आमासँगको गहिरो आत्मीय मायाममताको सम्बन्ध परिवारमा छ भन्ने बुझाउनु हो । यस्तै हिराज्यानको परिवारमा हिराको मात्रै वर्णन गरिएको छ ।

शारीरिक र मानसिक यातना सहन नसकेर मोतीमायाले घर छोडेर आत्महत्याको बाटो अपनाउनुपर्ने स्थितिले घरवरपर हिराज्यानजस्ता आइमाईलाई कुरा काट्ने माध्यम सिर्जना भएको देखिन्छ । हिराज्यानको परिवारका अरू सदस्यहरूको खासै उपन्यासमा उपस्थिति देखिँदैन । अरूको घरपरिवारमा झैझगडा उत्पन्न गराई त्यसबाट आनन्द लिने पात्रका रूपमा उसलाई लिन सकिन्छ । यसले के बुझाउँछ भने प्रमोद र हिराज्यानको नजिकको छिमेकी भए पनि यी दुई परिवारमा आपसी सद्भावको मित्रताको, छिमेकीको नाता नभएर परचक्रीको सम्बन्ध भएको उपन्यासमा पाउन सकिन्छ । यस्तै *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा परिवारका रूपमा मोहनबहादुरको परिवार पनि आएको छ । उसको परिवारमा वर्तमान समयमा बहिनीहरू मात्रै घरमा भएको, श्रीमतीलाई घरबाट निकाल्दै अर्को विवाह गरेको सन्दर्भ उपन्यासमा देखा पर्दछ । मोतीमायालाई सुरुमा आत्महत्या गर्नबाट बचाई उसलाई बहिनी बनाएर घरमा राख्छु भनेर घर लग्छ । बिस्तारै मोतीमायाको घरको कमीकमजोरीको फाइदा उठाउँदै मोतीमायालाई मायाजालमा पारेर त्यसलाई लामो समयसम्म भोग गरी पछि घरबाट निकाला गर्छ ।

उपन्यासमा सबैको घरपरिवार एकल परिवारका रूपमा देखा परेका छन् । एकल परिवारका रूपमा देखापरे तापनि सबैको घरलाई सही व्यवस्थापन गर्न नसकेर घरको पारिवारिक स्थिति लथालिङ्ग भएको छ । उपन्यासमा धेरैजसो परिवारमा पुरुषले दोस्रो विवाह गरेपछि जेठी श्रीमतीले धेरै पीडा पाएको, महिलाले दोस्रो विवाह गरेर पनि यौनको सिकार हुनु मात्रै परेको, पुरुषहरूले प्यास मेटाएपछि अर्की स्त्री भेटेपछि अगाडिको बुढीलाई घरबाट काम नदिने गाईलाई निकाला गरेझैँ तिनलाई निकाला गरेको देखिन्छ । यो सबै हुनु भनेको पितृसत्तात्मक नेपाली समाज हुनुका साथै घरको मूलीले घरका सबै सदस्यको यथार्थ कुरा नबुझेर अरूको कुरा मात्रै सुन्ने प्रवृत्तिले हो । उपन्यासमा भएका अधिकांश महिलाले शारीरिक र मानसिक यातनाले घर छोडे तापनि पछि उनीहरूले गुठी, वेश्यालयजस्ता सङ्घसंस्था खोलेर आफ्नो वर्चस्व कायम गरेको, पीडामा स्वास्नीमान्छेहरूलाई उद्धार गर्न तथा आफ्नो जीवनलाई तिलाञ्जली दिनसमेत पछि नपरेको देखिन्छ । धेरैजसो महिलाको पहिलाको घरपरिवार भताभुङ्ग भएको उपन्यासमा देखिन्छ ।

पेसाका रूपमा पारिवारिक संरचना हेर्दा प्रमोद जागिरे र उसको छोरा विनोद विद्यार्थी, श्रीमतीहरू मोतीमाया धर्मभक्त, पतिव्रता नारीका रूपमा भए पनि परिबन्दले उनलाई वेश्या बनाएको, कमला भान्छे बाहुनीका रूपमा र चम्पालाई नोकर्नी पेसामा हुनुपरेको देखिन्छ । हिराज्यान अरूको चियोचर्चा गर्ने पेसामा नै आबद्ध देखिन्छ । मैयाँनानी गुठीकी नायिका र मिस्रीदिदी वेश्यालयको प्रमुख पेसामा आबद्ध रहेका छन् । यसका साथै विभिन्न सङ्घसंस्था खोलेर सामाजिक सेवा गर्नका लागि अन्यायका विरुद्ध आवाज उठाउन शक्ति एकीकरण गर्नका लागि परिस्थितिले वेश्याजस्ता पेसा अपनाउनुपर्ने बाध्यता भएको पारिवारिक संरचना यहाँ देखिन्छ । यस्तै वेश्यालयमा काम गर्ने सम्पूर्ण नारी वेश्या बन्नका लागि नभएर वेश्या बन्नबाट रोक्नका लागि वेश्यालय खोल्नु परिरहेको उनीहरूको पारिवारिक कथा, व्यथा रहेको देखिन्छ । साथै आफ्नो पारिवारिक जिम्मेवारीलाई वहन गरेर सबै आआफ्नो पेसाप्रति आबद्ध पारिवारिक संरचना यस *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा भेटिन्छ ।

यसर्थ *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा परिवारका रूपमा अधिकांश एकल परिवार, पेसाका रूपमा जागिरे, विद्यार्थी, भान्छे, भक्त, नोकरनोकर्नी, समाजसेवा, वेश्या, ठेकदार, पुरोहित, न्यायाधीश, पुलिस, सशस्त्रसैनिक, सिपाही आदिजस्ता विभिन्न पेसा अपनाएर बसेका मानिसहरूको पारिवारिक संरचनाहरू रहेका छन् । विशेष रूपमा प्रमोदको पारिवारिक नातासम्बन्ध हेर्दा परिवारभित्र मेलभन्दा पनि बेमेल भएको, परिवारभित्र चार सदस्य मात्रै भए पनि विनोद र मोतीमायाबिच आमाछोराको र रगतको सम्बध छ भने कमला र प्रमोदको सम्बन्ध श्रीमान् श्रीमती भए पनि प्रेमीप्रेमिकाको जस्तो सम्बन्ध रहेको देखिन्छ । मोतीमाया र विनोदलाई प्रमोदले घरबाट निकाल्नसमेत पछि पर्दैन । उता परिबन्दले विनोदले आफ्नै बुबाका विरुद्ध आमाको न्यायका लागि लड्नुपर्ने नियति सिर्जना भएको छ । यता मोतीमायाले श्रीमान्लाई धेरै माया गरे तापनि उसलाई श्रीमान्ले माया नगरेको पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध देखिन्छ । पुस्तागत रूपमा पारिवारिक संरचना हेर्ने हो भने दुईपुस्ते पारिवारिक सामाजिक संरचना उपन्यासमा भेट्न सकिन्छ ।

स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा सामुदायिक संरचना

सामुदायिक संरचना निर्माणका स्थितिलाई हेर्दा मुख्यतः आर्थिक, शैक्षिक, भौगोलिक, भाषिक आदि संरचना पर्दछन् । हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानको *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा पनि सामुदायिक संरचनाका रूपमा भौगोलिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक संरचनाहरू देखा परेका छन् । यसका साथै न्यायालयको समुदाय, पुलिस, सैनिक, सशस्त्र, सिपाहीहरूको समुदाय, आन्दोलनकारीको समुदाय, राजनीतिक समुदाय आदि जस्ता सामुदायिक संरचना पनि यहाँ भेटिन्छन् ।

भौगोलिक सामुदायिक संरचनाका रूपमा काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाभित्रको सामुदायिक संरचना उपन्यासमा देखा पर्दछ । काठमाडौँको उपत्यकाको पनि स्वयम्भूडाँडा, पशुपति मन्दिर, बागमती नदी, कलकत्ता सहर, काठमाडौँको गल्ली, सडक, इटुबहालको राजनीतिको आमसभा, पश्चिमाञ्चलको गीत र जेल, न्यायालय र

त्यहाँवरपरको भौगोलिक समुदायको चित्रण गरेको पाइन्छ । मोतीमाया आत्महत्या गर्न जानेबेलामा स्वयम्भूडाँडाको भौगोलिक समुदाय आएको छ । उक्त तलको उपन्यासांशबाट केही भौगोलिक समुदायबारे स्पष्ट पार्न सकिन्छ :

यस्तै प्रकारले मोतीमाया स्थितिबाट तानिँदातानिँदै फेरि सिम्भूको डाँडाउक्लन पुगिन् । मोतीमाया छोराकी आमा भइसके तापनि सौन्दर्यको बलियो टेवा पाएकी हुनाले उनको यौवन वसन्तमय नै थियो मानौं सोह्रवर्षीय कुमारीको भिटामिनदार यौवनजस्तै उनको तारुण्य फुलिरहेको थियो त्यसैले प्रायः सज्जन मानिसहरूका हृदयमा पनि लोभले घर गर्न खोज्दथ्यो । रावणका कैयन् अवतारले मोतीमायालाई एक्लै भेट्टाएका पनि थिए, तर बलात्कार गर्न खोज्ने दुष्टहरूबाट आफू निभेर होइन, जे अगाडि छ त्यसले हिर्काएर त्यसलाई निभाएर पनि स्त्रीहरूले आफ्नो सतीत्व रक्षा गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने गान्धीको उपदेशले स्त्रीहरूले उपाध्याया हुँदै आइरहेका देखेर हो कि कुन्नि किन हो, केवल लोभले हेरेर रावण मेटाइरहेको थिए (पृ. ३७) ।

प्रस्तुत उपन्यासांशमा साँझपख मोतीमाया आत्महत्या गर्नका लागि स्वयम्भूको डाँडाको एउटा जङ्गलमा जान लागेकी देखिन्छ । ऊ शारीरिक रूपले निकै सुन्दरी भएकाले सोह्र वर्षीय कुमारीको भिटामिनदार यौवनले जस्तोसुकै सज्जन मानिसहरूको हृदयमा पनि लोभ पलाएको हुन्छ भन्ने सन्दर्भ पनि यहाँ देखा पर्दछ । मोतीमायाले आफूमाथि कोही बलत्कार गर्न आए अगाडि जे छ त्यसैले हिर्काएर आफ्नो सतीत्व रक्षा गर्नुपर्छ भनी गान्धीको उपदेशलाई पनि मनन गर्दै हिँडिरहेकी थिइन् । यसले के विचार प्रकट गरेको छ भने तत्कालीन समयमा त्यहाँको समुदायका मानिसहरूले एक्लै स्त्री साँझपख एकान्तमा भेटे बलात्कार गर्न पुग्छन् भन्ने विचार पनि प्रकट गरेको छ । उपन्यासकारले तत्कालीन समयको चित्रण गरे तापनि वर्तमान समयमा पनि यो परिवेश सिर्जना भएको नै देखिन्छ । आफ्नो समुदायमा पनि मानिसहरू सुरक्षित नभएका, आफ्नै समुदायका मानिसहरूले पनि परस्त्रीप्रति आँखा लगाइरहेको मौका छोपेर त्यसको प्रत्यक्ष फाइदा लिन केही गोमन सर्पजस्ता प्रवृत्ति भएका मानिसहरू पनि समुदायमा छन् । तिनीहरूप्रति हरेक नारीहरू सदैव सचेत रहनुपर्छ भन्ने धारणा पनि उपन्यासकारको रहेको पाइन्छ ।

घर छोडेर हिँडेका नारीहरूले आफ्नो समाजमा भएको गिद्धेनजर प्रवृत्तिका पुरुषहरू-बाट पतिव्रता बचाइरहनका लागि उनीहरूले आफूले सकेको सुरक्षाका उपायहरू अपनाउनु-पर्दछ । तत्कालीन समयमा नारीहरू एक्लै हिँड्न डराउनुपर्ने समुदायको पनि चित्रण भएको देखिन्छ। तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजमा ठाउँठाउँमा धेरै गुन्डाहरू भएको तिनीहरूबाट अबला नारीहरू जोगिरहन पनि गाह्रो परेको समुदायको चित्रण गरेको पाइन्छ । मोतीमाया, मैयाँनानी, वासन्ती यसका प्रतिनिधि पात्रका रूपमा देखा परेका छन् । समाजमा हजारौं मोतीमायाहरू परपुरुषबाट असुरक्षित छन् भन्ने सन्दर्भ पनि उपन्यासमा भेटिन्छ ।

शैक्षिक समुदायको रूपमा पनि *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा केही झलकहरू पाइन्छन् । प्रमोद र उसको छोरा विनोद, मोहनबहादुर, मोतीमाया, कमला र मैयाँनानी, वासन्ती, मिस्री दिदी जस्ता पात्र शैक्षिक समुदायका सदस्यहरू हुन् । मैयाँनानी, वासन्ती, मिस्रीदिदीलाई नियतिले वेश्या बन्न बाध्य पारेको अवस्था उपन्यासमा देख्न सकिन्छ । प्रमोद जागिरे मान्छे हो । ऊ जागिरे यस अर्थमा छ कि ऊ शिक्षित पनि छ भन्ने अर्थ लाग्छ किनकी अशिक्षित मान्छेले कमै जागिर पाउँछन् । उसले सहजै जागिर पाएको र घरमा एउटा नोकर पनि राखेको सन्दर्भ उपन्यासमा भेटिन्छ । यस्तै उसको छोरा विनोद पनि शिक्षित भनेर भन्न सकिन्छ किनकि उसलाई आमा मोतीमायाबाट अलग्याउन अध्ययनका लागि जबर्जस्ती कलकत्ता पठाउन लाग्दा आमासँग बरु नभेट्ने म यतै बस्छु भनेर कागजपत्रमा हस्ताक्षर गर्दछ । यसकारण पनि विनोद शिक्षित छ भन्ने सन्दर्भ स्पष्ट हुन्छ । यस्तै मोहनबहादुर समाजमा विभिन्न दार्शनिक कुरा गरेर केटीहरूलाई एकैछिनमा पगाल्छ । उसले आत्महत्या गरेर मर्न लागेकी मोतीमायालाई विभिन्न उदाहरण दिँदै, दार्शनिक कुरा गर्दै मर्नबाट बचाउँछ । मोहनबहादुरका भनाइहरू मोतीमायालाई जति सुने पनि अझै सुनिरहन मन लाग्ने र अझ विनोदलाई भेट गराउँछु भनी मोतीमायासँग गरेको प्रेरणादायी कुराले आफ्नो घरसम्म लैजान सफल हुन्छ र उसबाट फाइदा लिन्छ । यो कारणले पनि ऊ शिक्षित भन्ने कुरा बुझ्न सकिन्छ । उसले एउटा चिठी लेखेर मोतीमायालाई पढ्न दिन्छ । यसकारण मोतीमाया पनि शिक्षित नै भएको ठहरिन्छ । यदि मोतीमाया अशिक्षित भएको भए चिठी पढ्न उसलाई आउँदैन थियो । यस्तै प्रमोदकी कान्छी श्रीमती कमला शिक्षित व्यक्ति नै भएको कुरा ठहर्छ किनकि उसले कमल नाम गरेको चिठी आफ्नो श्रीमान् प्रमोद मोतीमायालाई लेखेको चिठी भनेर दिन्छे यदि ऊ अशिक्षित भएको भए यो चिठी भनेर थाहा पाउँदिन थिई । यस्तै मिस्रीदिदी पनि शिक्षित छ, ऊ शिक्षित भएर नै अप्ठ्यारोमा, अन्यायमा परेका नारीको उद्धार गर्नका लागि त्योभन्दा अगाडि शक्ति सञ्चित गर्नका लागि वेश्यालयसमेत खोल्न ऊ पछि पर्दिन । उसले रोडमा, सडकमा अलपत्र परेका नारीहरू लगेर वेश्यालयमा जागिर दिन्छे र परपुरुषसँग सुत्नका लागि आग्रह गर्दै पछि बिस्तारै महिलालाई अन्यायका विरुद्ध लड्न आम नारीलाई सचेत गराउँछे, अन्यायका विरुद्ध हतियार प्रयोग गरी गोली चलाउनसमेत ऊ पछि पर्दिन । न्यायको पक्षधर भएर वकालत गर्ने सचेत नारी भएकाले पनि उसलाई शिक्षित समुदायमा राख्न सकिन्छ । *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा केही मात्रामा राजनीतिक समुदाय पनि आएको छ । अहिलेका मान्छेहरू राजनीतिको नाममा आफ्नो स्वार्थ पूरा गर्ने, यसले समाजमा एकआपसमा कलह निम्त्याउने पनि गराउँछन् । उक्त सन्दर्भ उपन्यासमा यसरी आएको छ :

महिला संस्थाहरू त छन् २-४ वटा, अझ कति जन्मँदै छन् तर ती संस्थाहरू त छन् तर ती संस्थाहरूले महिलाहरूको खास प्रतिनिधित्व गर्नुभन्दा राजनीतिक गुटहरूका कठपुतली बनिरहेका छन् । राजनीतिक स्वार्थले गर्दा महिला संस्थाहरू आपसमा कलह र फुट पैदा भई शक्ति र प्रभावहीन भइरहेका छन् । सामाजिक सुधार र आन्दोलन गर्न न तिनले अवकाश पाएका छन् न अध्ययन । तैपनि

महिला संस्था भएको हुनाले म गौरव राख्दछु । अहिले भएका महिला संस्थाहरूसित पनि अपिल गरी संयुक्त मोर्चा खडाँ गरी तत्कालीन स्थितिको निम्ति नारीहित मात्रको आन्दोलन गर्ने विचार गरेकी छु (पृ.१०७) ।

माथिको उपन्यासांशमा महिला हितका लागि खोलिएका केही संस्था भए पनि ती संस्थाहरूले महिलाहितका लागि काम गर्दैनन् बरु राजनीतिक गुटका कठपुतली बनी आफ्नो स्वार्थमा लागिरहेको प्रसङ्ग उपन्यासमा आएको छ । यहाँ मैयाँनानीले वर्तमान समयमा भएका महिला संस्थाहरूसित संयुक्त मोर्चा बनाएर तत्कालीन स्थितिको निम्ति नारीहितको आन्दोलन गर्ने विचार गरेको देखिन्छ । सबै नारीहरूले सामाजिक हितका लागि एक हुनुपर्ने धारणा मैयाँनानीले मोतीमायालाई अभिव्यक्त गरेको देखिन्छ ।

उपन्यासमा यसरी हेर्दा शिक्षित र अशिक्षित समुदायको चित्रण गरेको पाइन्छ । अशिक्षित समुदायका पात्रको रूपमा चम्पा, नैनी, मोहनबहादुरले चम्पालाई बुझ्न लगाएको केटो आदि देखा परेका छन् । यहाँ शिक्षित र अशिक्षित समुदायको चित्रणभन्दा पनि पितृसत्तात्मक समुदायको चित्रण गरेको पाइन्छ । समुदायलाई आर्थिक दृष्टिकोणले हेर्ने हो भने उच्च वर्गको र निम्न वर्गको समुदायको चित्रण गरेको पाइन्छ । उच्चवर्गभित्र प्रमोदको परिवार, मोहनबहादुरको परिवार देखा पर्दछ भने निम्नवर्गभित्र चम्पा, चम्पालाई विनोदका लागि बोलाउने केटा, मैयाँनानी, नानीप्राण, लीलालगायतका घरखर्च चलाउनका लागि वेश्यालयमा काम गर्ने नारीका रूपमा देखा पर्दछन् । उनीहरूलाई आफ्नो राजीखुसीले नभई परिबन्दले नै त्यो ठाउँमा पुर्‍याइएको छ । भाषिक समुदायका दृष्टिले हेर्ने हो भने धेरैजसो नेवारी शब्दको प्रयोग भएकाले नेवारी समुदायभित्र पनि बाहुन जातिको समुदाय उपन्यासमा देखा पर्दछ ।

स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा सामुदायिक संरचनाभित्र भौगोलिक समुदायका रूपमा काठमाडौँको स्वयम्भू वरिपरिको समुदायको चित्रण छ भने शिक्षित समुदायमा शिक्षित र अशिक्षित समुदाय, आर्थिक समुदायभित्र हुनेखाने र हुँदा खाने समुदायको र जातिगत रूपमा हेर्दा बाहुन समुदायका साथै न्यायालयको, आन्दोलनकारीको समुदाय, वेश्यालयको समुदाय, पुलिस, सैनिक, सिपाही, सशस्त्रहरूको समुदाय जस्ता थुप्रै समुदायहरू सामाजिक संरचनाको रूपमा उपन्यासमा खचाखच रूपमा भरिएका देखा पर्दछन् ।

स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा लैङ्गिक संरचना

सामाजिक संरचनाको अर्को मुख्य आधार लैङ्गिक संरचनालाई मानिन्छ । *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा पनि लैङ्गिक संरचनाको सशक्त प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ । पितृसत्तात्मक नेपाली समाज भए पनि उपन्यासकारले भने यस उपन्यासमा नारीप्रधानताको चित्रण व्यापक रूपमा गरेको पाइन्छ । उपन्यासको शीर्षक नै स्वास्नीमान्छे भनेर राखिएको छ । यस उपन्यासमा पुरुष र स्त्रीपात्र दुवैको प्रयोग गरिए तापनि कार्यका आधारमा भने नारी

सशक्तता बढी देखिन्छ । प्रमोद, विनोद, मोहनबहादुर, रमानन्द बाबुलाल, भत्तराज, भलादमी, इज्जतदार पुरुष, नवयुवक, पशुपतिको जोगी, गुन्डा, सुरप्रसाद, रामे, न्यायाधीश आदि जस्ता पुरुषपात्रको प्रयोग भएको छ भने मोतीमाया, कमला, हिराज्यान, चम्पा, अधबैंसे आईमाई, मिस्री दिदी, नौली आइमाई (नानीप्राण), लीला, दालचिनी, चुली, मैयाँनानी, जूईनानी, वासन्ती, अञ्जनाकुमारीलगायतका नारी पात्रको प्रयोग हुनाका साथै पुलिस, सशस्त्र, सैनिक, सिपाही, आन्दोलनकारी, जनता आदि जस्ता पात्रहरूको प्रयोग पनि उपन्यासमा भएको देखिन्छ । विशेषत: मोतीमायाको केन्द्रीयतामा यो उपन्यासको सिर्जना भएको देखिए तापनि अरू स्वास्नीमान्छेको पनि निकै महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको पाइन्छ । मैयाँनानी, वासन्ती, मिस्रीदिदीले नारीहिंसाका लागि बुलन्द आवाज उठाएका छन् । *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा केकस्तो लैङ्गिक हिंसा भएको छ त्यसलाई यहाँ अध्ययन गरिएको छ ।

मोतीमाया प्रमोदकी जेठी श्रीमती हुन् । उनी पतिव्रता नारी, आफ्नो धर्मकर्म नछोड्ने नारी भए तापनि प्रमोदले निकै शारीरिक र मानसिक यातना दिएको छ । सौता कमलाको किर्ते शङ्काका आधारमा प्रमोदले मोतीमायालाई नानाभाँती अपच शब्द बोल्दै हातपात गर्दासमेत केही प्रतिकार नगरी निरीह भएर खालि यातना मात्रै सहिराख्छे । उक्त प्रसङ्गलाई उपन्यासमा यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

एकदमै झम्टेर प्रमोदले भने, "के भनिस्, च्यातिदिऊँ तेरो मुख ! लाज छैन तँलाई ? (तकियामुनिबाट चिठी भिकी देखाएर) कसले लेखेको यो चिठी ?" लौ भन् रन्डी (चुल्हो समातेर भकाभक लत्याउँदै) कसले लेखेको यो चिठी ? "त्यस्तै गुन्डाहरूको-बाट मनग्गे भरथेग पाएर नै फुर्ती पनि बढ्न सकेको ।" प्रमोदको रिसको आगोमा कमलाले घिउ हालिदिइन् (पृ.१३) ।

उक्त माथिको उपन्यासांशमा मोतीमायालाई आफ्नो श्रीमान्को मुखबाटै नै बिनागल्तीमा नै यस्तो रण्डी भन्ने शब्द सुनेपछि उनको मन छियाछिया हुन्छ । त्यसैमा उनकी सौता कमलाले गुन्डाहरू मनग्गे भरथेग पाएर फुर्ती बढेको भनेपछि कमलाको वाक्यले आगोमा घिउ थप्दा मोतीमायाको घाउँमा नुनचुक हालिदिएको जस्तो हुँदासम्म केही बोल्न सक्दिनन् केवल पीडा सहनबाहेक केही हुँदैन । यसले मोतीमायालाई सहनशील नारीका रूपमा पनि चिनाएको पाइन्छ । आफ्नो छोरा नाबालकमाथि विनाकारण अन्याय हुँदासमेत उनी केही विद्रोह गर्नसमेत आँट गर्न सक्दिनन् । जहिले पनि पतिबाट हुने लैङ्गिक हिंसा सहेर मात्र बस्नुपर्ने मोतीमायाको दयनीय अवस्था सिर्जना भएको देखिन्छ । आफूमाथि सौता हाल्दासमेत केही बोल्न नसक्नु, सौताको किर्ते चिठीको समेत केही स्पष्ट जबाफ दिन नसक्ने खालि आँसु मात्रै बगाउने चरित्रका रूपमा उनलाई पाउन सकिन्छ ।

जति गर्दा पनि श्रीमान्को ज्यादती खप्नै नसकेपछि मोतीमाया कोठामा एक्लै विनोदलाई छोडेर आत्महत्या गर्ने सोचविचारले फेरि घरबाट निस्कन्छिन् । छोराप्रतिको मातृत्वपनको आभास गर्दै, छोराका लागि केही गर्न नसकेकाले आत्मग्लानि गर्दै पासोमा चढ्न लागेकी मोतीमायालाई मोहनबहादुरले देख्छ । मोहनबादुरले

मर्न लागेकी मोतीमायाको यथार्थ बुभ्रेर मरेर मात्रै तिम्रो समस्याको समाधान हुँदैन, अभ्रु आत्महत्या गरेर मर्नु त महापाप हो भन्दै उसलाई सम्झाइबुझाइ गरी घर जाऊँ बरु म प्रमोदलाई सम्झाउँछु भन्दा पनि घर जान मान्दिनन् । घर जान नमानेपछि आफ्नो घर जाऊँ र बहिनीका रूपमा मेरो घरमा राख्छु भन्छ तैपनि मोतीमाया मान्दिनन् । जब मोहनबहादुरले विनोदलाई भेटाउने जिम्मा मेरो अब हिँड मेरो घर भनेर भन्छ तब मोतीमाया विनोद भेट्न पाइने, दाजुको नाताले भनेर स्वार्थी मोहनबहादुको घर जान बाध्य हुन्छिन् । बिस्तारै विभिन्न जालजेल किर्ते मायाप्रेम लगाएर मोतीमायालाई आफ्नो स्वास्नी बनाई उनलाई भोग गर्न ऊ सफल हुन्छ । लामो समय भोग गरी आफ्नो यौनिक प्यास मेटाएरपछि मोहनबहादुर मोतीमायालाई अनेक लाञ्छना लगाएर घरबाट काम नलाग्ने गाई धपाएँझैँ धपाउँछ । यहाँ पनि मोतीमाया मोहनबहादुरबाट लैङ्गिक हिंसामा परेको सामाजिक लैङ्गिक संरचनालाई उपन्यासमा यसरी उद्धृत गरिएको छ :

मोहनबहादुरले आगो भएर कुकुर चुट्भैँ चुटी मोतीमायालाई घिसार्दै, पछ्रार्दै घरबाट निकालिदिए । कोही मानिसले पनि रोक्न सकेनन्, ढोका बाहिर पुर्‍याएर पनि मोहनबहादुरले अभ्र कुट्दै थिए । मोतीमाया क्वाँ-क्वाँ रुँदै थिइन् । छिमेकका मानिसहरूले उनको अत्याचार हेर्न नसकेर बाहिर आएर मोहनबहादुरलाई सम्झाउन थाले । "हाई ! स्वास्नीलाई पनि यस्तरी कुट्ने, भइगो नकुट्नुहोस् ।" छिमेकीहरूतिर हेरेर मोहनबहादुरले भने "स्वास्नी त तब मात्र स्वास्नी हो जबसम्म लोग्नेको भलाइ चाहेर भक्ति गर्छे, जो पनि गुन्डालाई अँगालिहाल्छे भने त्यो बेला पनि स्वास्नी स्वास्नी हुन्छे ? यसको चरित्रको बारेमा म के भन्नूँ, लाजले कुरा घाँटीमै अड्छ " (पृ.८८) ।

माथिको उद्धरणले के सङ्केत गरेको छ भने जसरी प्रमोदले मोतीमायालाई घरबाट निकाला गरेको थियो त्यसैगरी मोहनबहादुरले पनि मोतीमायाबाट अघाइ सकेपछि विभिन्न आरोप लगाएर समाजका अगाडि बेइज्जत गरी निकालि दिन्छ । जति बिन्तीभाउ गर्दा पनि उसलाई घरभित्र पस्न दिँदैन । यहाँ एकपछि अर्को पुरुषले उसलाई भोग गरेर घरबाट जबरजस्ती निकालिन्छ । पतिव्रता श्रीमती मोतीमायालाई यसरी घरबाट बिनाकारण निकालेर सडकमा अलपत्र पार्नुपर्ने सामाजिक संरचना निर्माण भएको देखिन्छ । यसरी श्रीमान्प्रति भक्तिभाव जनाउँदाजनाउँदै पनि दुई-दुईवटा श्रीमान्बाट अपहेलित हुनुपरेको, आफ्नो सतीत्व लुटिनुका साथै शारीरिक र मानसिक यातना भोग्नुपरेका कारणले पनि उनलाई अभागी नारीका रूपमा हेर्न सकिन्छ । पुरुषप्रधान नेपाली समाजमा मोतीमायाजस्ता सोभासाभा सतीसावित्री नारीहरूलाई बाँच्न कठिनाइ परेको अवस्था सिर्जना भएको छ ।

मोहनबहादुरबाट अपहेलित भई सडकमा पुगेकी मोतीमाया गुन्डाको सिकार हुनबाट जोगिने उपाय खोज्ने सिलसिलामा पहिलोपटक अन्जानमा मिस्रीदिदी र दोस्रोपटक जानीजानी मैयाँनानीको वेश्याकोठीमा शरण लिन पुगे पनि उनी वेश्या बन्न मान्दिनन् । पछि मैयाँनानीले मोतीमाया वेश्या बन्न नमानेपछि गीत

गाउनेमा उसलाई राखिन्छ । मोतीमाया वेश्यालयमा आउने मानिसहरूलाई गीत गाएर मनोरञ्जन प्रदान गर्ने कार्यमा खप्पिस हुन्छ । उक्त प्रसङ्ग उपन्यासमा यसरी प्रस्तुत भएको देखिन्छ :

हार्मोनियमको सुरमा मोतीमाया आफ्नो कण्ठ फुटाएर सुमधुर तान छोडिरहेकी थिइन्, मानौं ऋतुराज वसन्तै कोठामा आगमन भइरहेकैँ महफिलमा रमणीयता छाइरहेको थियो, रौनक बढिरहेको थियो, मोतीमायाको मीठो र सुरिलो तानमा त्यस्तो जादु थियो । तबला बजाउने बाईजी पनि टाउको र आङ हल्लाउँदै मस्त झुलिरहेकी थिई । अरू बाइजी र मोतीमाया लठ्ठ परेर मुखमुद्रामा मुस्कान उडाइरहेका थिए । पुरुष जातिमा एउटै व्यक्ति थियो, बोतलबाट काँचको गिलासमा रक्सी खन्याउँदै, पिउँदै मोतीमायाको गाना सुनेर लट्टपट्ट भएको थियो । ...ऊ बीच-बीचमा जुरुक्क उठ्थ्यो पनि । हातमा नोट लिएर बीच-बीचमा मोतीमायाको गालानिर हात लैजान्थ्यो, मोतीमायाले अनि उसको हात झट्कारिदिन्थिन् । मैयाँनानी अनि त्यस व्यक्तिको हातबाट नोट हत्याउँथिन् (पृ.१२८-१२९) ।

माथिको साक्ष्यमा मोतीमायाको लय र सुर एकदमै राम्रो भएको, मुखमुद्रामा मुस्कानका साथ गीत गाउनमा तल्लिन भएकी मोतीमायासँगै तबला बजाउने बाईजी पनि निकै रमाई, टाउको र आङ हल्लाउँदै मस्त रमिरहेको परिवेश सिर्जना भएको देखिन्छ । एकजना पुरुष पनि सुरिलो भाकासित गीत गाएकी मोतीमायाको गीत सुनेर लठ्ठ परेको सन्दर्भ पनि उक्त उद्धरणमा आएको छ । मोतीमायाले गीत गाएर नै सबैलाई लठ्ठ पार्ने र तिनीहरूबाट नोटहरू झार्ने, त्यसपछि ती नोटहरू मैयाँनानीले जम्मा गर्ने गरेको सन्दर्भ पनि यहाँ आएको छ । यसर्थ तत्कालीन समयमा भद्रभलादमीहरू मनोरञ्जन लिनका लागि वेश्यालयमा धाउँथे भन्ने सन्दर्भ उपन्यासकारले व्यक्त गरेका छन् ।

उक्त सन्दर्भले के पुष्टि गर्छ भने तत्कालीन समयमा विभिन्न परिस्थितिले भनौँ या परिबन्दले भनौँ मोतीमायाजस्ती पतिव्रता नारीले दोस्रो विवाह गर्नुपरेको, त्यहाँबाट पनि घर निकाला भएपछि कताकताबाट परिबन्दले उनलाई वेश्यालयमा गीत गाउन बाध्य हुनुपरेको छ । मोतीमाया जस्ता नारीहरू समाजमा केवल मनोरञ्जनको साधन मात्रै हुन पुगेको देखिन्छ । नियतिले ठगिएकी मोतीमाया एक कोमल मातृहृदय भएकी पात्र हुन् । घरबाट लोग्नेले बिनाकारण शङ्का गरेर घरनिकाला गर्दा आत्महत्या गर्न जाँदा खेरी विनोदलाई सम्झेर घर आउँछिन् र आफ्नो विवाहको दाइजोको कपडा राखेर हिराज्यानकामा पच्चीस रुपैयाँ ऋण माग्दा उसले पाँच रुपैयाँ मात्र दिएको र त्यसको विनोदलाई बिस्कुट किनेर दिने मायालु पात्र हुन् । विनोदलाई बिस्कुट दिएर हिराज्यानलाई विनोदलाई आमाको माया दिनुहोला भन्दै स्वयम्भूको डाँडामा मर्न जाने नारी पनि हुन् । मर्नबाट मोहनबहादुरले मोतीमायालाई बचाउँछ । मोतीमायाजस्ती पतिव्रता नारीले दोस्रो विवाह गर्नुपरेको, त्यहाँबाट पनि घर निकाला भएपछि कताकताबाट परिबन्दले उनलाई वेश्यालयमा गीत गाउन बाध्य हुनुपरेको छ । खुसीको कुरा यो हो कि अन्तत: मोतीमायाले मर्नु नपरेर आफ्नो छोरा विनोदले गर्दा आफूमाथि अन्याय गर्ने

प्रमोद र कमलालाई सजाय दिन र सत्यतथ्य बुझ्ने आफ्नो मायालु छोरा विनोदसँग घरमा बस्न सफल भएकी छिन् । आमा र छोराको सम्बन्ध श्रीमान् श्रीमतीभन्दा पनि निकै घनिष्ठ हुन्छ भन्ने भाव पनि यसले दिएको छ ।

उपन्यासका अर्का सशक्त पात्र विनोद पनि नारी पक्षधरका रूपमा आएको छ । आफू पुरुष भए तापनि अन्यायमा परेका नारीहरूको हितका लागि आफ्नो बुबालाई समेत गुमाउनुपर्रेको अवस्था भएको छ । अन्याय गर्ने समाजमा जो सुकै किन नहोस् त्यसका विरुद्ध सदैव लडिरहनुपर्दछ । नारीलाई बिगार्ने भनेको नै पुरुषले हो त्यसैले समाजमा भएका गुन्डा प्रवृत्तिका मानिसहरूको अन्त्य गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने धारणा विनोदको रहेको छ । ऊ उपन्यासमा प्रगतिशील विचारको वाहकका रूपमा पनि देखा पर्दछ । मैयाँनानी जेल परे पनि उसकी आमा मोतीमायासित मिलेर मैयाँनानीका नाममा उसले मैयाँ-महिला सङ्घ स्थापना गराएको छ । उक्त सन्दर्भ उपन्यासमा यसरी आएको छ :

आखिरमा मैयाँनानीको फैसला सुनेर विनोद र मोतीमाया ज्यादै पीडित भए । उनको स्मृतिमा विनोदले आफ्नो घर 'मैयाँ-मन्दिर'को नामले आफ्नी आमा मोतीमायाको अध्यक्षतामा 'मैयाँ-महिला सङ्घ' स्थापना गराई त्यही सङ्घलाई अर्पण गरिदिए । घोषणामा विनोदले भनेका थिए, "सीता सती स्त्रीलाई भन्दा म मैयाँनानीजस्ती रण्डीलाई हृदय दिएर पूजा गर्दछु, म आशा गर्दछु, यो घर 'मैयाँ-मन्दिर' बाट नारी जातिमा असङ्ख्य मैयाँनानी तयार हुनेछन् र यो 'मैयाँ-मन्दिर' लाई देखेर तथा सम्झेर रावणजस्ता अमानुष मानव पनि राम बन्नेछन् " (पृ.१४७) ।

माथिको सन्दर्भ विनोदले मैयाँनानीको आजीवन जेलको सजायपछि नारी हकहितका लागि सदैव आफ्नो ज्यान धरापमा राखेर लडिरहेकी मैयाँनानी अन्यायका विरुद्ध लड्दा आफ्नो बुबालाई गोली हानेर मार्दासमेत मैयाँनानीको पक्षमा नै वकालत गर्ने विनोदको चरित्र देखा पर्दछ । चरित्र पुरुषप्रधान नेपाली समाजको अन्त्य गर्ने र बिनागल्ती अन्याय, अत्याचारमा परेका नारीको उद्धार गर्न विनोदले आफ्नी आमा मोतीमायाको अध्यक्षतामा मैयाँ-महिला सङ्घ स्थापना गराएको देखिन्छ । यो संस्थाले सदैव मैयाँनानीलाई रण्डीको रूपमा परिचित नगराई मैयाँमन्दिरको नामले परिचित हुने धारणा विनोदले राखेको छ । जसले हजारौं मैयाँनानी निर्माण गर्ने छ । ती मैयाँनानीहरूले रावणजस्ता अमानुषीलाई पनि राम बनाउन मद्दत गर्नेछन् भन्ने प्रगतिशील विचार विनोदले उक्त सन्दर्भले गरेको छ ।

पुरुषप्रधान समाज भए पनि अन्ततः सत्यताको जित भएको, न्यायको जित भएको, महिलाको जित भएको सन्दर्भ उपन्यासकारले गर्विलो तरिकाले प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । यसले लैङ्गिक सामाजिक संरचनालाई दरिलो बनाएको छ । विनोदजस्तो प्रगतिशील विचार भएको पुरुष र मैयाँनानी, मिस्रीदिदी, वासन्ती जस्ता न्यायका लागि सदैव लडिरहने नारीहरूको समाजमा सदैव आवश्यकता छ । नारीका पक्षधर मात्र नभई न्याय, उत्पीडनका

पक्षधरका रूपमा विनोद, मैयाँनानी र वासन्तीजस्ता चरित्रलाई उभ्याएर उपन्यासकारले पनि प्रगतिशील विचार यस उपन्यासमा अभिव्यक्त गरेका छन् ।

स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा धार्मिक संरचना

धार्मिक संरचना पनि सामाजिक संरचना निर्माण गर्ने एक प्रमुख आधार हो । *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा आफ्नो घरको मुक्ति र पारिवारिक सुखका लागि विभिन्न सन्दर्भमा धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचना निर्माण भएको देखिन्छ । उपन्यासमा मोतीमाया नै धार्मिक संरचनामा पनि अरूभन्दा बढी सशक्त देखा पर्दछे । सैदव पति र छोरा विनोदको रक्षाका लागि र दुःखबाट मोचन हुनका लागि बेलाबेला भगवान्को नाम जप्छे । मोतीमायाको घरमा पूजाकोठा पनि छुट्टै भएको हुनाले बिहान, बेलुका उक्त कोठामा उसले पूजा गर्छे । उक्त सन्दर्भ उपन्यासमा यसरी प्रस्तुत भएको छ :

> आँखाभरि आँसु गरी अनि कृष्णको मूर्ति देखेर हाँसी-हाँसी करुणहँस्य मुद्रामा मोतीमायाले आरतीको दीप घुमाइरहेकी थिइन् । घडीघडी उनी आरतीको दीप घुमाउँथिन्, छिनछिनमा फेरि आरतीलाई भुइमा राखी दुवै हात जोडेर कृष्णमूर्तिसित आफ्नो दुख पोख्दै उद्धारका निम्ति निवेदन गरिरहन्थिन्, "हे प्रभु, दुःखभञ्जक, मेरो आँसु पुछ्ने यो संसारमा कोही छैन ! हे अनाथका नाथ, दुःखसागरमा डुबिरहेकी यस अबलालाई उतार ! सर्वान्तर्यामी करुणानिधान ! तातो फलामबाट पोलाइरहेका यस असहायमाथि पनि दृष्टिपात गर । हे भगवान् मेरो बालक छोरालाई बचाउन पाउनलाई जस्तै दुःखकष्टमा पनि मलाई बाँच्न सक्ने बल देऊ ! " यस्तै गरी-गरी मोतीमायाले आधारात बिताइन् । कृष्णको पाउ परिरहँदारहँदै भुसुक्क नीद आएको पनि मोतीमायालाई पत्तै भएन (पृ.१) ।

माथिको साक्ष्यबाट नै मोतीमाया धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचनाकी प्रतिमूर्ति हो भन्ने बुभ्न सकिन्छ । उसले बिहान पूजा गर्नुका साथै सधैँभरि बेलुका नि पूजा गर्ने गरेकी छे । आँखाभरि आँसु गरी आफ्नो दुख, पीडाँबाट मुक्ति प्राप्त होस्, मेरो संसारमा आँसु पुछ्ने कोही नभएको, दुःखसागरमा सधैँभरि डुबिरहनुपर्ने, तातो फलामबाट पोलाइरहेका असहायलाई अब दुःख नेदउ भगवान भनी बेलाबेला भगवान्को नाम जप्दै घरीघरी आरती कृष्णको मूर्तिमा घुमाउँदै केही हाँसेर, बेलाबेला दुवै हात जोडेर भगवान् कृष्णको भक्तिमा तल्लीन हुन्छे । आफ्नो छोरा विनोदलाई कहिले पनि दुःखकष्ट नआओस् भनी भगवान्लाई बेलाबेला पुकार्छे । मलाई जस्तोसुकै पीडामा पनि बाँच्न सक्ने शक्ति देऊ भगवान् भनेर विचरा मोतीमाया भगवान्को भक्ति गर्दा, कृष्णको पाउ पर्दा अनि दिनभरिको थकानले निद्रा लागेको पत्ता नै पाउँदिन र भुसुक्क त्यही पूजाकोठामा नै निदाउँछे । पुसको जाडोमा पनि उसलाई जाडोको महसुस नभई ऊ निकै गहिरो निद्रामा मस्तसित सुत्छे । उसलाई हौसला, माया दिने मान्छे कोही नभएकी मोतीमाया कोमल हृदय भएका कारणले कसैले हेलचक्र्याइँ गरी आँखाले हेरे पनि उसलाई गहिरो चोट पुग्छ । ऊ जतिबेला पनि पीडामा हुन्छे उसलाई घरमा कोही पनि सहानुभूति दिने मान्छे पाउँदिन

। मोतीमाया बिहान र बेलुका भगवान् कृष्णको पूजा गर्न पाउँदा मात्रै खुसी देखिन्छे । उक्त सन्दर्भलाई यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

> कसैले पनि हेलचक्राइँका आँखाले हेरेमा मोतीमायाको कोमल हृदयमा तुरुन्तै चोट लागिहाल्थ्यो । केवल यति कुराको आँखाले हेरेमा मोतीमायामा सहानुभूति चाहन्थिन् । तर सधैँजसो मोतीमायाले सुस्केराबाट सास फेर्नुपर्थ्यो, कहिले पनि सन्तोषको सास फेर्नु तिनले पाउँदैनथिन् । त्यसैले मोतीमाया बिहान पूजा र बेलुका आरतीको रूपमा दिनहुँ घण्टौँ-घण्टौँ कृष्णजीको मूर्तिअगाडि बसेर जिन्दगी गुजार्थिन् । केवल त्यसैमा उनलाई आनन्द उपभोग हुन्थ्यो (पृ.१) ।

माथिको साक्ष्यमा पनि धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचनाको प्रयोग भएको देखिन्छ । मोतीमायाले अरू बेला सुखको साससमेत फेर्न नपाएको, घरको मान्छेले अनि समाजले उसको करुणादायी अवस्थालाई नबुझेर नै ऊ घण्टौँ-घण्टौँ कृष्णजीको मूर्तिअगाडि बसेर हरदिन आफ्ना मनभित्रका पीडा वेदना पोख्थी र केही आनन्दको अनुभूति गर्थी । यसबाट के बुझ्न सकिन्छ भने मान्छेलाई खुसी पार्ने भनेको ईश्वर नै हो, भगवान् नै हो, पूजा गरेर आरती गरेर नै मानिसले आफूलाई सन्तोषमा पार्न सक्छ भन्ने हो । मानसिक पीडालाई भगवान्बाहेक अरू कसैले हटाउन सक्दैनन् । पूजाआजा नै दुःखीको अन्तिम खुसी हो, धार्मिक कार्यले नै मान्छेमा खुसी दिने गर्छ भन्ने सन्दर्भ उपन्यासकारले *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा मोतीमायाका माध्यमबाट स्पष्ट पारेका छन् ।

यहाँ मोतीमाया मात्रै धार्मिक कार्यमा संलग्न नभई मिस्री दिदी, मैयाँनानी, विनोद जस्ता पात्रहरू पनि प्रगातिशील विचारका भए पनि आफ्नो धर्मलाई भने उनीहरूले भुलेका छैनन् । मिस्रीदिदी हेरक दिन बागमती नदी जाने कुरा पनि लीलाले बताएकी छन् । बागमती आफैँमा धार्मिक नदी हो । अझ बागमतीजस्तो पवित्र नदीमा बिहानै जानु भनेको त त्यहाँ पूजा गर्न, नुहाउन, जल लिन जानु भन्ने बुझिन्छ । यसकारण पनि मिस्रीदिदी पनि धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचनामा ध्यान दिन्छिन् भन्ने हो । यस्तै मैयाँनानीले पनि मोतीमायालाई म आफ्नो धर्म त कहिले नि बिर्सन्न तर म पशुपतिमा सन्न्यासी भएर बस्दा पनि त्यहाँका जोगीले मलाई भोगदृष्टि लगाए भन्ने सन्दर्भ आएको छ । भिक्षुणी बनी भिक्षा माग्दा पनि गुन्डाको घरमा परेकाले उसले आफ्नो सबै सतीत्व हनन गरेको त्यसपछि मात्रै आफूले वेश्यालय खोल्नुपरेको बाध्यात्मक अवस्था उनले अवगत गराएकी छिन् । यस्तै विनोदले आफ्नी आमालाई वेश्यालयबाट घर लिएर आउँदा प्रमोदले तेरी आमा दुईदुईवटा विवाह गरेर पनि वेश्यालयमा पुगेकी हो । तैँले आमालाई देउता सम्झेर, भगवान् सम्झेर मेरो घर ल्याइस् यो रण्डीलाई भन्दा विनोदले त्यसको कडा जबाफ दिएका छन् । हो मेरी आमा देउता हो, मेरी आमा भगवान् हो, देउता, भगवान्जस्ती मेरी आमालाई रण्डी बनाउने तपाई हो पतिव्रता रहेकी मेरी आमा भनेर आफ्नो बुबा प्रमोदलाई भन्छन् । यसबाट के बुझ्न सकिन्छ भने आमा देवतासमान हो, ऊ सधैँ पतिव्रता हुन्छे, आफ्नो सतीत्व जोगाउन आफूले सकेको हरदम कोसिस गर्छे भन्ने सन्दर्भ उपन्यासमा आएको छ ।

यसर्थ यस *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा पूजा गर्नु, आरती गर्नु, बागमती जानु, पशुपति जानु, स्वयम्भू, जोगी भिक्षु कृष्णको मूर्ति, भगवान्को पुकार आदिजस्ता विषयवस्तु धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचना निर्माण गर्नका लागि सशक्त रूपमा आएका छन् भनेर बुझ्न सकिन्छ । धार्मिक संरचनाको परिपोषण गर्नमा उपन्यासमा मुख्य भूमिका मोतीमायाको नै रहेको देखिन्छ । उनले हरेक बिहान पूजाकोठामा गई पूजापाठ गर्ने र हरेक बेलुका कृष्णमूर्तिको वरिपरि दीप बालेर आरती गर्ने गरेकी छिन् । यसरी *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा मोतीमायालाई धार्मिक संरचना निर्माण गर्ने प्रतिमूर्तिका रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ । धार्मिक कार्यमा पुरुषभन्दा पनि महिला नै बढी सक्रिय रहेको देखिन्छ । मोतीमायालगायत मिस्रीदिदी, मैयाँनानी पनि धार्मिक कार्यमा अगाडि नै रहेकाले पनि यो कुरा अझ बढी पुष्टि भएको देखिन्छ ।

निष्कर्ष

हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानको *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको विद्यमान यथार्थलाई चित्रण गरेको देखिन्छ । सामाजिक चेतनाले समाजमा भएका व्यक्तिहरूको समूह वा वर्गलाई एउटै समूहमा रहेर उनीहरूको पहिचानको धरातल निर्माण हुन्छ भन्ने गोल्डमानको मान्यतास्वरूप *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचना शीर्षकको लेखमा समस्या सामाजिक संरचना के कस्तो छ भन्ने हो । यसै समस्यामा केन्द्रीकृत हुँदा उनको यस उपन्यासमा सामाजिक संरचनाका रूपमा पारिवारिक संरचना, सामुदायिक संरचना, लैङ्गिक संरचना र धार्मिक संरचना रहेका छन् । पारिवारिक संरचनाका रूपमा स्वास्नीमान्छे उपन्यासमा प्रमोद हिराज्यान, मोहनबहादुर, मैयाँनानी, मिस्रीदिदी, नानीप्राण, वासन्ती आदिका परिवारहरू एकल परिवारका रूपमा देखापर्दछन् । किनकि यी सबैको परिवारमा बुबाआमा र छोराछोरीबाहेक अरू सदस्यहरूको उपस्थिति देखिदैन । यिनीहरूको हरेकका परिवारमा श्रीमानले दोस्रो विवाह गरेका कारण जेठी श्रीमतीले पीडा सहन नसकेर घर छोडेर जानुपर्ने पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध पनि उपन्यासमा पाइन्छ । पेसाका हिसाबले प्रमोद जागिरे, विनोद विद्यार्थी हुन् भने चम्पा नोकर्नी, मैयाँनानी, सिस्रीदिदी, नानीप्राण आदि परिबन्दले वेश्या बन्नुपरेको बाध्यात्मक अवस्था सिर्जना भएको पाइन्छ । उपन्यासमा विशेष गरेर प्रमोदको परिवारको नातासम्बन्ध हेर्दा मोतीमाया र विनोदको आमाछोराको एक किसिमको पवित्र हार्दिक प्रेम छ भने प्रमोद र कमलाबीच अर्को किसिमको पतिपत्नीको हार्दिक प्रेम रहेको पाइन्छ । छोरा विनोदले अन्यायका लागि लड्दा आफ्नो बुबासित नै लड्नु पर्ने बाध्यात्मक अवस्था पाइन्छ । परिवारलाई शैक्षिक रूपमा हेर्दा मोतीमायाको परिवारका सबै सदस्यहरू शिक्षित रहेका छन् । यसरी *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासलाई पारिवारिक संरचनाका रूपमा एकल परिवार, पेसा, नातासम्बन्ध, विवाह, नेतृत्व आदि देखापर्दछन् । उपन्यासलाई सामुदायिक संरचनाका दृष्टिले हेर्दा भौगोलिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक, भाषिक, जातीय संरचनाहरू रहेका छन् । भौगोलिक संरचनाका रूपमा गाउँ र सहरका विभिन्न ठाउँहरूको समावेश भएको पाइन्छ । विशेष गरी स्वयम्भू, पशुपति मन्दिर, बागमती नदी, कलकत्ता सहर, काठमाडौँका गल्ली, इटुबहालको आमसभा आदि भौगोलिक संरचनाका रूपमा रहेका छन् । आर्थिक रूपले हेर्दा प्रमोद, मोहनबहादुर,

इज्जतदार पुरुष, न्यायाधीश, अञ्जनाकुमारी, सुरप्रसादजस्ता पात्रले सम्पन्न समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेका छन् भने मैयाँनानी, मिस्रीदिदी, चम्पा, नानीप्राण, वासन्ती आदिजस्ता पात्रले विपन्न समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेका छन् । शैक्षिक दृष्टिले समाजमा धेरै पात्रहरू सरकारी जागिरे, सैनिक, सिपाही, न्यायाधीशजस्ता पात्रले शिक्षित समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेका छन् भने चम्पा नानीप्राण आदि पात्रले अशिक्षित समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेका छन् । लैङ्गिक संरचनाका दृष्टिले पुलिङ्गी र स्त्रीलिङ्गी दुवै पात्रको प्रयोग भए तापनि विचारका हिसाबले स्त्रीलिङ्गी पात्रहरूको भूमिका सशक्त रूपमा आएको छ । समाजमा पितृसत्तात्मक सोचले नारीहरूलाई दमन गर्न खोज्दा त्यसका विरुद्ध नारीहरू सबै एकजुट भएर नारी हकहितका लागि विभिन्न महिला सङ्घसंस्थाहरू खोलिनुका साथै अन्यायअत्याचारका विरुद्ध मैयाँनानी, वासन्तीजस्ता नारीहरूले नेतृत्व गरेर, उत्पीडित नारीहरूलाई अग्रसर गराउन, हतियार समाएर, गोली चलाउनसमेत पछि परेका छैनन् । यसरी नारी सशक्तताले समाजलाई परिवर्तन गर्न खोजिएको *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा पाइन्छ । यसमा विनोदजस्ता कुशल पुरुषहरूले पनि नारीका हकहितका लागि सदैव साथ दिनुपर्छ भन्ने सन्देश दिएको छ । धार्मिक सामाजिक संरचनाका दृष्टिले मोतीमायाले बिहान पूजाकोठामा पूजाआजा गर्ने र साँझ कृष्णमूर्तिको वरिपरि घुमेर आरती गर्ने भएकाले उसलाई धार्मिक संरचनाको प्रतिमूर्तिका रूपमा हेर्न सकिन्छ । यस्तै मिस्रीदिदी हरेक बिहान बागमती नदी नुहाउन जाने गरेको, मैयाँनानीले पशुपति जान नछाड्ने सन्दर्भले धार्मिक संरचनाको विकास हुन पुगेको पाइन्छ । यसरी *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यास विभिन्न सामाजिक संरचनाले परिपोषण भई यसले साझा विश्वदृष्टिको विकास गरेको पाइन्छ । अतः हृदयचन्द्रसिंह प्रधानका *स्वास्नीमान्छे* उपन्यासमा तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजमा प्रचलित विचार, मूल्यमान्यताहरू, सामाजिक सम्बन्धहरू, पारिवारिक संरचना, सामुदायिक संरचना, लैङ्गिक संरचनाजस्ता सामाजिक संरचना आएका छन् । यस्ता सामाजिक संरचनाले युगीन नेपाली समाजको प्रतिबिम्बन गर्नु नै यसको निष्कर्ष हो ।

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